

Sustainable Environment Network Society (SENS)
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Harwinder Sandhu, MLA
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Re: Circular Economy for BC

Dear Mrs Sandhu

On behalf of directors of the Sustainable Environment Network Society (SENS), I extend congratulations on your recent win as MLA for our riding.

We directors, (who represent about 80 - 100 SENS members and hundreds more newsletter readers/supporters) are writing to ask for your support to encourage changes in BC laws as well as to encourage new laws so that we citizens, and our environment, all benefit. At a recent Zoom event we and other SENS members and followers watched, then discussed, what we wanted to see for BC and for our local area that address our built-in obsolescence and 'buy, use, toss' economy.

As you are aware, many in BC, and Canada, don't think about the energy waste of extraction, manufacturing, shipping, short use, so we throw valuable resources out with an 'out of sight out of mind' mentality. We are overusing our earth's resources far too fast to be sustainable. Earth Overshoot Day (the day we used all the Earth's resources for the current year) is now in August – it should not even happen.

From concerns expressed, we generated these requests for you to bring up and push for in Parliament. Nothing will happen unless mandated by government. Guidelines are only good if companies are ethical, and money, not ethics, seems to win.

We ask that the following be mandated by the BC government for all of our futures:

1. Education is a major part of expecting change. We should be making drastic changes on the same lines as is becoming mandated in Europe with cradle to cradle and circular economies – nothing is 'tossed'. Instead, all will be repurposed or remade into the same thing again. Anything that is manufactured must be repairable within a very short time. Any company that creates a product MUST be expected to take it back (or pay enough that jobs are created to take it apart for repurposing at no taxpayer cost).
2. The major garbage hauling companies in BC must work with cities and regional districts to REDUCE what they pick up for landfilling, not just "manage"...but it won't happen unless mandated by the BC government with a bylaw that states that nothing can be dumped if it can be re-used. We have read in the past that 99% of all "garbage" is recyclable! Our taxes should go towards recycling and creating jobs that use recyclable materials rather than paying large companies handsomely to 'disappear' what we no longer want.
3. All municipalities/cities must create free, one-stop-drop-take stores where we can drop materials that still have use, for others to claim for their own use. The centres should also provide repair services so that materials can have their lives lengthened for the current owner or even for a new owner. We have asked for one-stop-drop-take stores here and there's NO one listening – they just want things we toss to disappear via a very well-paid garbage company. SENS volunteers have sponsored a "Repair Café" for years and all the Regional District did was assist with advertising. They are supposed to reduce what goes to fill landfills but do not support a program of volunteers that keeps 'stuff' out of our landfills. They do not care about the costs to taxpayers of building costly new, leaky garbage dumps 'away' where we don't see them.
4. A recent BC-generated *Recycling Regulations Policy Intentions Paper (deadline of Nov 20 for submissions)* only talks about "managing", not reducing, not (almost) completely removing waste. The policy paper also completely ignores plastic of any kind. Single use plastics are poorly managed. 90 % of all plastics end up landfilled but plastic bag companies, for example, lobbied so that we could not ban single use plastic bags.

Plastic water bottles are also a scourge. What is the true cost of oil extraction and transportation, and, making, filling and shipping plastic containers, AND true cost of recycling or repurposing them? Perhaps, with that true cost in mind a much higher recycling price can be put onto every plastic container at point of sale.

5. The Federal government's intentions paper on a circular plastics economy (deadline is Dec 9) still only talks of managing plastics (a bandaid solution at best) – but plastics are still 'out there' and plastic producers lobby hard NOT to be curtailed so a fee of \$1.00 per container (pop, water, shampoo, laundry liquid etc) to the company producing the plastics would act to curtail quickly. We must drastically reduce production at source but still provide alternatives.

We welcome a Zoom meeting – or some form of face-to-face meeting with you in the near future to see how we might work together to better all our lives and better our environment.

Please feel free to contact me at 250 503-3150 to arrange a discussion meeting.

Yours sincerely

Sigrid-Ann Thors
Chair SENS

Two items viewed for the Nov 26,2020 Circular Economy discussion evening:

"Circular Economy - Definition and Examples by Sustainability Illustrated." (youTube)

'Circular Economy: hacking a broken system while building a new future'. (Ted Talk by Harald Friedl)

Some background information on SENS:

We are a non-profit, volunteer run, grass roots society promoting environmental awareness in the North Okanagan using these venues:

- Monthly speaker/event
- Annual environmental film festival
- Seedy Saturday
- Handmade Holiday
- Pollinator Path Project
- Curbside Giveaway
- Electric car show
- Solar projects and awareness
- Environmental representation on various committees, providing feedback to local government and supporting other local non-profits
- Website, monthly newsletter and facebook page
- All-candidates environmental forums during elections