City of Nanaimo

BC Circular Economy Strategy

Whereas the provisioning and management of goods and food consumed by BC communities produces excessive and unnecessary quantities of waste, pollution and carbon emissions that threatens environmental health.

Whereas the concept of a Circular Economy provides a vision and framework to design out waste and pollution, keep products and materials in use and regenerate natural systems to help BC communities move towards Zero Waste; and

Whereas, the province has yet to develop a comprehensive strategy to transition BC's economy to a circular one;

Therefore, be it resolved that UBCM request that the province of BC develop a provincial Circular Economy strategy.

Background

The provisioning and management of food and goods consumed by BC Communities produces quantities of waste, pollution and carbon emissions that exceed equitable per capita environmental limits. The average British Columbian is consuming materials at a rate 3x what the earth can sustain[1] and Canadians in general are one of the highest per capita generators of waste in the world.[2] Through a "by systems" analysis of GHG emissions, nearly 50% of North American emissions result from the extraction, production, transportation, consumption and disposal of materials for the provisioning of goods and food[3]. As a global community we have exceeded key environmental limits in terms of per capita ghg emissions, land conversion, loss of biodiversity and chemical pollution.[4] With the large amount of materials consumed and disposed of by British Columbians, an increased effort to transition out of our current linear take-make-waste economic system is necessary to do our fair share for the health of the planet.

The concepts of Zero Waste and Circular Economy provide a Vision and Policy Framework to transition BC's economy to sustainably provision and manage the materials it consumes. ZWIA defines Zero Waste as:

> "The conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse, and recovery of products, packaging, and materials without burning and with no discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment or human health."[5]

To date, hundreds of local governments have adopted Zero Waste as the ultimate goal for waste reduction efforts. The concept of the Circular Economy broadens the vision of Zero Waste and establishes a concrete model that couples economic well-being with environmental sustainability. The concept of the "Circular Economy" is in contrast to the linear "take-make-waste" economy and can be characterized as:

> "An industrial economy that is, by design or intention, restorative and in which material flows are of two types, biological nutrients, which are designed to

re-enter the biosphere safely, and technical nutrients, which are designed to circulate at high quality without entering the biosphere. Materials are consistently reused rather than discharged as waste."[6]

A circular economy operates on three key principles; designing out waste and pollution, keeping materials in use and regenerating natural systems.[7]

There is a need for a comprehensive provincial circular economy strategy to improve BC's waste reduction efforts and to take advantage of emerging economic opportunities. To date, waste reduction policy, has been focused on "downstream' interventions looking for disposal alternatives to materials such as composting and recycling collection for selected materials. Critical "upstream" drivers of waste, pollution and GHG's resulting from the types and origins of products entering into local economies and the infrastructure and services necessary to keep materials in circulation have not been given adequate attention. Currently only 9% of BC's economy is circular in nature, with too few measures in place to address the other 91% of materials still following the linear take-make-waste path. A circular economy strategy would provide the vision and framework to adequately prioritize and identify policy initiatives capable of addressing the systems change necessary.
These include addressing product design, shortening supply chains and expanding circular material management such as repair, re-use, sharing and remanufacturing capacity. A comprehensive circular economy strategy with benchmarked targets for increasing circularity would provide a clearer road map of what needs to be accomplished, allowing the province to best utilize its powers in supporting local governments in tackling the waste issue and create sustainable jobs.

[1] https://www.footprintnetwork.org/our-work/ecological-footprint/

[2] https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2019/07/12/canada-united-states-worlds-biggest-producers-of-waste/39534923

[3] https://www.no-burn.org/wp-content/uploads/PPI-Climate-Change-White-Paper-September-2009.pdf

[4] https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries/planetary-boundaries/about-the-research/the-nine-planetary-boundaries.html

[5] http://zwia.org/zero-waste-definition/

[6] Jurisdictional Scan for Circular Economy, Final Report; BC Ministry of Environment; https://delphi.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/delphi_circular_economy_scan.pdf

[7] https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/circular-economy/concept