



VANCOUVER CITY COUNCIL MOVES TO BAN FOAM FOODSERVICE PACKAGING IN SPITE OF OVERWHELMING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR RECYCLING THE MATERIAL

Vancouver (May 17th, 2018) – A public opinion survey released today shows that a decision by Vancouver City Council to ban polystyrene foam foodservice packaging is highly unpopular with residents at only 26% support. The vast majority of residents want to continue to use the material and have it picked up at curbside and recycled. A ban will force the entire foodservice sector to switch to paper packaging from foam.

The survey showed that support for a ban dropped precipitously from 69% to 26% as respondents were given more facts about the recycling of both foam polystyrene and paper foodservice packaging. This was due in large part to “Strong support” for a ban plummeting from 46% to a low of 9% as residents learned that foam polystyrene can be recycled, making a ban unnecessary.

[Click here](#) to access the **Vancouver Survey of Residents on Polystyrene Foam Foodservice Packaging**.

Seventy-six percent were unaware that foam can be recycled even if contaminated with food waste. “Once they know there is now a recycling technology called de-polymerization that can do this, they feel a ban is unnecessary,” said Joe Hruska, VP of Sustainability at the Canadian Plastics Industry Association. “This technology breaks down the molecules of polystyrene to their original virgin state so the material can be reused as if brand new to make new food packaging, safety equipment, medical supplies, inks, and number of products.”

Residents were also very concerned after learning that paper cups and containers are not compostable or recyclable in Vancouver, and that banning foam polystyrene could lead to a significant triple-digit increase in the amount of paper waste going to landfill.

The industry welcomes the offer by staff in their Single-Use Reduction Strategy to revisit the ban on foam polystyrene if foam can be shown to be recyclable. CPIA believes this review should begin immediately and the ban revisited.

“The survey shows that residents are looking for more sustainable solutions that give them more choice,” added Craig Foster, Sustainability Consultant for CPIA in BC. “Eighty percent want to see more public education and 78% want the City to start recycling all polystyrene foam foodservice packaging using the new de-polymerization technology.”

Greater access to recycling was also raised by respondents to the survey with 73% indicating that they want the City to introduce curbside recycling for all polystyrene foam

cups and containers. According to the survey, residents are already doing it. 69% of respondents reported that they put their take-out containers in their curbside recycling bin at home and 48% do the same for their take-out cups. Depot collection is not popular with only 10% taking containers to the depot and 6% their take-out cups.

“One of the most interesting findings in the survey is that Vancouverites see litter as a people problem and think that the City should aggressively enforce its litter laws,” Foster commented. “This is where the City can make a real difference.”

The issue of public bin space recycling was also addressed by respondents (64%) in the survey who, given that the bin contamination issue will not be solved by a ban on foam foodservice packaging, think that the City of Vancouver should send contaminated public space bin material to the Energy from Waste Facility to generate electricity.

The plastics industry believes that Council is moving in completely the wrong direction with a ban on foam cups and containers. And that actions like this ban pose a threat to achieving zero waste and building a circular economy.

“At the end of the day, it is all about the 4 R’s (reduce, reuse, recycle and recover) and building a sustainable system,” adds Hruska. “We will never get there with these kinds of policies. The stifling effect of this ban on innovation is very serious. On top of that, this ban will do nothing to reduce the amount of material going to landfill or solve the public bin recycling and litter issues. It is hard to see the win in Council’s decision.”

The survey, conducted by Pollara Strategic Insights between May 10th and May 14th, was an online survey of 500 Vancouver residents including a large sample of Chinese Canadians. Technically, a margin-of-error is not possible using an online panel, which uses a representative versus a random sample. The margin-of-error for a probability sample would be +/- 4.4% 19 out of 20 times.

About the Canadian Plastics Industry Association (CPIA)

Since 1943, the Canadian Plastics Industry Association has served as the national voice and leader for plastics industry sustainability across Canada and beyond, representing the interests of the plastics value chain including resin and raw material suppliers, processors/converters, equipment suppliers, recyclers and brand owners.

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