

2026.01 Amend Federal Plastic Regulations to Require Tethered Bottle Caps on Single-use Beverage Containers

Resolved, that national council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada in 106th national annual meeting of members assembled urges the federal government to amend regulations under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999*, including the *Single-use Plastics Prohibition Regulations 2022*, to require tethered bottle caps on single-use beverage containers.

Brief: Amend Federal Plastic Regulations to Require Tethered Bottle Caps on Single-use Beverage Containers

Plastic pollution remains a significant environmental challenge in Canada. Each year, Canadians throw away three million tonnes of plastic waste, only 9% of which is recycled (Canada, Canada One-Step). Tearing open plastic packaging and opening plastic bottle caps can generate approximately 10 to 30 nanograms of microplastics per 300 centimetres of plastic packaging (Canada, Environment 133). Environment and Climate Change Canada estimates that 1% of plastic waste enters the environment in Canada and, in 2016, this amounted to 29,000 tonnes of plastic pollution (Canada, Environment). As faithful stewards of God's creation, The Catholic Women's League of Canada has consistently promoted the care and protection of the environment.

Ocean Wise's 2024 *Shoreline Cleanup Impact Report* lists beverage cans, plastic bottles and bottle caps among the 12 most frequently found litter items on Canadian shorelines (Millette 8). Wildlife may ingest these plastics or become entangled in plastic debris, resulting in injury or death (Canada, Environment, Health 82).

Although the federal government has taken action to address plastic pollution through the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* and the *Single-use Plastics Prohibition Regulations 2022*, bottle caps remain a common source of litter (Millette 8).

These regulations do not currently require beverage bottle caps to remain attached to containers throughout their intended use (Canada, Environment). Once a detached cap enters the environment, its high surface-area-to-mass ratio accelerates fragmentation into millions of microplastic particles, which are virtually impossible to clean up (Canada, Environment, Health).

Tethered polyethylene terephthalate (PET) caps allow bottles and caps to be recycled together as a single PET material while helping meet tethered-cap regulations and reduce plastic waste ("World's"). The European Union has already recognized a need for tethered caps. Under the *Single-Use Plastics Directive* (EU) 2019/904, beverage containers up to three litres must have caps and lids that remain attached during the product's intended use (European). Canada has an opportunity to adopt a similar approach and align its regulatory framework with emerging international best practices.

Preventing bottle caps from entering the environment as waste is one way to reduce plastic pollution. The Catholic Women's League of Canada urges the federal government to amend regulations under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999*, including the *Single-use Plastics Prohibition Regulations 2022*, to require tethered bottle caps on single-use beverage containers.

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Works Cited

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Action Plan: Amend Federal Plastic Regulations to Require Tethered Bottle Caps on Single-use Beverage Containers

1. Communicate with members of parliament, the minister of environment, climate change and nature and the minister of health, urging support for regulations under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* 2022 requiring tethered caps on single-use beverage containers. Refer to the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* for options, including letter-writing, petitions and postcards.
2. Raise awareness within councils and communities about the impact of plastic pollution and the environmental benefits of tethered bottle caps.
3. Support and engage with environmental organizations (e.g., *Laudato Si'* Movement, Development and Peace—Caritas Canada, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society) that advocate for stronger plastic reduction policies in Canada.
4. Promote education and action within parishes and youth groups by encouraging the reduction of single-use plastics and participation in local environmental initiatives such as community clean-ups.
5. Monitor the federal government's response.