



Right Honourable Justin Trudeau  
Prime Minister of Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

October 7, 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing on behalf of Canada's fresh fruit and vegetable industry to bring to the attention of your government our sector's concerns in relation to the government's plan to ban the use of certain single-use plastics in Canada. While we commend the government on their efforts to reduce plastic waste, we urge you to work closely with our supply chain to find evidence-based solutions to reduce the use of unnecessary and problematic plastics and create an effective circular economy in Canada.

The arrival of COVID-19 in Canada not only brought fears for our health and safety, but concerns about whether food shortages would occur. While Canada has been fortunate that the worst-case scenarios for our food supply were never realized, this renewed focus on our food supply chain is an opportunity to better understand the instrumental role food packaging plays in protecting the safety and integrity of our food and in reducing food waste by extending the shelf life of many products.

The Canadian produce industry has been deeply engaged across all segments of the supply chain to reduce and mitigate the use of plastics. The Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) has deliberately taken a leadership role in this space through the work of our [CPMA Plastic Packaging Working Group](#) to assist the produce industry in navigating the highly complex goal of utilizing plastic packaging in the most economically and environmentally responsible means possible over the short, medium and long term.

In December 2019, the CPMA Plastics Packaging Working Group released a *Technical Report and Roadmap*, detailing steps we're taking to achieve our vision of keeping plastics in the economy and out of the environment. This means driving plastic packaging innovation while also working to increase recycling rates and explore other sustainable packaging alternatives, like composting and packaging reuse.

On June 1st of this year, the Plastics Packaging Working Group published the *CPMA Preferred Plastics Guide*. This guide is intended to help inform and support CPMA members in their packaging decision making processes, and will be updated as developments in packaging materials, design and recycling capabilities warrant. A more comprehensive *CPMA Material Selector Guide* is due to be published in the coming weeks, and will help our members choose the packaging materials that can provide the food safety and shelf life benefits they need to keep fresh fruit and vegetables on Canadian tables while making the least environmental impact.

This work is a concrete example of the innovation and collaboration that the Government can harness and build upon to effectively reduce the use of unnecessary and problematic plastics, while also considering the food safety and food security implications of reducing the use of plastics for fresh produce. We believe

Canada must work in a targeted approach to reduce problematic and unnecessary plastics to help foster long-lasting solutions to manage plastic pollution. The complexity of the approach must account for the flexibility the fresh produce industry needs to responsibly use plastics when they are the most affordable and effective tool for safety and health.

We encourage the Government to work closely with industry to take a systems approach to find solutions that are evidence-based, and include a combination of education, innovation, and effective recycling collection within communities across Canada. CPMA would particularly like to emphasize that the development of harmonized, efficient and cost-effective recycling collection within communities across Canada is of utmost importance in supporting a circular economy. Without this critical infrastructure in place, industry transitions to recyclable or compostable packaging materials will be rendered futile.

On behalf of the fresh fruit and vegetable supply chain, I would like to offer our support to the efforts of you and your cabinet to mitigate the use of unnecessary and problematic plastics and reduce food waste in Canada. CPMA and our members are ready and willing to be active partners in finding effective and workable solutions to these challenges, and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this further.

Sincerely,



Ron Lemaire  
President  
Canadian Produce Marketing Association

Cc: Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance  
Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of the Environment  
Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food  
Hon. Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities  
Hon. Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry

#### About CPMA

The Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) is a not-for-profit organization representing companies that are active in the marketing of fresh fruits and vegetables in Canada from the farm gate to the dinner plate. CPMA is proud to represent over 810 domestic and international members, across all segments of the fresh produce industry, who are responsible for 90% of the fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Canada.