

# CUTLERY

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## CONSULTATION REPORT



# INTRODUCTION

## PLASTIC AND BIOPLASTIC CUTLERY CANNOT BE RECYCLED

Plastic and bioplastic cutlery contribute to Canada's abysmal recycling rate of 9%, leading to more plastics in landfills, the environment, and incinerators. Items that cannot be recycled, like plastic cutlery, continue to depend on greenhouse gas intensive virgin materials, which need to be continually replenished. Every year, Canada emits 1.89 million metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in effort to replace the 91% of lost and discarded plastic every year. The Ocean Conservancy also lists cutlery as among the items "most deadly" to sea turtles, birds, and mammals worldwide.

According to Forbes, the number of individual plastic utensils wasted is estimated to be 40 billion per year in the United States alone (there are currently no estimates for Canada). After just one single use, most cutlery is "thrown away" and ends up in landfills and waterways. Surfrider has been conducting beach cleanups on the Pacific Rim since 2015, and in the last six years, plastic cutlery has continued to be a common single-use plastic collected. In particular, plastic cutlery has been collected during every Multi-Use Path cleanup and road cleanup.

According to beach-cleanup data compiled by the non-profit 5Gyres, utensils are the seventh most commonly collected plastic item in the world. Additionally, from our local and remote cleanup data, we can concur that disposable plastic cutlery is present at both local and remote cleanup locations, thus, there is evidence that the cutlery is marine pollution opposed to just litter/trash.



## To Address This...

Surfrider launched the **Cut the Cutlery Campaign** with the goal of eliminating single-use plastic and bioplastic cutlery from the Districts of Tofino and Ucluelet by supporting businesses in voluntarily eliminating these items and getting them added to the Single-Use Plastic Regulation bylaws.

# CUT THE CUTLERY CAMPAIGN

BANNING PLASTIC/BIOPLASTIC CUTLERY IN 2021

Surfrider launched the **Cut the Cutlery Campaign** in the autumn of 2019. The goal is this campaign has been to support businesses in eliminating single-use plastic and bioplastic cutlery, and upon building business compliance, having this item added to both the District of Tofino and District of Ucluelet's Single-Use Plastic Regulation bylaws.

**Bioplastic cannot be composted** on the west coast, this material can only be landfilled. Studies are also showing that **bioplastic does not readily break down in the marine environment and poses many similar environmental threats as conventional fossil based plastics**. Before launching this campaign, since 2016, we have supported all Rip Curl surf competitions in switching off of plastic cutlery. Instead, we supported competitions in using reusable or wooden cutlery for food service at beach events, the latter of which has always been composted by Tofino Urban Farm Co. We've also **supported all 60 Ocean Friendly Businesses in eliminating plastic cutlery** since 2017.

Additionally, before launching the campaign, we consulted numerous groups on the feasibility of our campaign design and objectives, including the **Community Economic Development Advisory Committee (CEDAC)**. At that time of the CEDAC meeting, we were poised to establish a "deposit-refund" system for reusable cutlery with all west coast businesses. However, CEDAC pointed out that this would not create an equitable playing field for all sizes of food service businesses to participate. With this feedback, we redesigned the campaign, which has the following stipulations outlined on the next page.





# BUSINESS CHANGES

WE HAVE ASKED BUSINESSES TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING MANDATORY AND OPTIONAL CHANGES



- 1. Voluntarily eliminate plastic/bioplastic cutlery** (mandatory)
- 2. Supply reusable cutlery for in-house use** (mandatory)
- 3. Offer locally compostable takeaway cutlery on request only** (optional)
- 4. Offer bamboo or wooden compostable cutlery for a fee (\$0.25). This can be modeled similar to businesses who charge for bags or coffee cups, which will disincentivize the consumer and help businesses recoup the cost of takeaway packaging** (optional)
- 5. Sell reusable cutlery for a fee** (optional)

Since starting this campaign, we've **given away \$400.00 worth of locally compostable wooden cutlery** stock for businesses in order to support them in joining the campaign. We've also collected old plastic stock from businesses and have **paid to recycle these items**. We've **supported over 15 Ocean Friendly Businesses** in selling reusable cutlery packs for visitors who forget theirs at home or do not have them. Since 2019, we've also been **sharing education and raising awareness** about the dangers of plastic cutlery. Entire countries, including France, have banned plastic cutlery. All people have reusable cutlery they can travel with, and cutlery travel sets themselves have never been cheaper or more available. It's time for the **Tofino and Ucluelet to continue leading the way with action on plastics**, and we've never been better situated to ban a single-use plastic item!

# BUSINESS TRANSITION

THE NUMBER OF BUSINESSES CONVERTED, STILL OUTSTANDING AND THE REASONS FOR NON-COMPLIANCE

## **Total businesses using plastic and bioplastic cutlery before the campaign (2019):**

23 in Ucluelet

25 in Tofino

## **Total businesses converted through the campaign:**

22 in Ucluelet

22 in Tofino

**= 4 businesses outstanding**



## **REASON FOR BUSINESSES NOT CONVERTED**

**Gas 'N' Go:** This is a large corporation, and the manager at this business states she can never get ahold of the head office. She shared they barely give out plastic cutlery, and we gave them a stock of wood that should last a long time. She shared that the DoT should go forward and ban the item and then they will have to comply and she can make the changes without dealing with head office. This business was not compliant with the plastic straw and bag ban at the time of the ban being implemented, and are now compliant and have not made any complaints.

**Gary's** - They have received wooden cutlery and we are working with their representative at supplier, GFS, to get them switched over, this will likely just take some more time. They only use plastic forks and knives, wooden chopsticks are used.

**Eagle's Nest** - We've provided free stock to them and have not replied to any of our communications, we're still working on getting a response from them. We've met with their supplier, Sysco, who has informed us that they do not have bioplastic/plastic cutlery, but we haven't been able to confirm this. We'll continue to visit and pin this down.

**Surf Side Grill:** We've dropped off an ample amount of free wooden stock, we've visited numerous times, and requested meetings. The owner has been out of town and busy upon return. Surfside has been on board with all other Surfrider campaigns, so we're confident they will also change.

# BUSINESS FEEDBACK

THE PROCESS TO TRANSITION AWAY FROM PLASTIC AND BIOPLASTIC CUTLERY

Businesses have shared that the support they require is centred around ensuring their **supplier carries wooden cutlery** and that the price difference is not substantial. **Wooden cutlery has become cheaper on the market over bioplastic** cutlery, making it a more **favourable and economic alternative** for businesses. We have encouraged businesses to completely eliminate all single-use cutlery, which will result in even greater savings.

Another piece of feedback revolves around wooden spoons and their inability to stand up to heat. Unlike plastic, the wooden spoons are not very deep, and flatten when used with hot liquids like soup. To address this, we've **ordered other models of locally compostable cutlery** from numerous other companies to sample in order to see if there's a specific model that will work better. **The best model we have seen is Ecotensil**, which is heat resistant and has a "deeper" spoon, which we've supplied to both Surf Side Grill and Ucluelet Co-op to sample. The Ucluelet Co-op loves these spoons and is switching off bioplastic to this product!

As mentioned, **Surfrider has spent \$400.00 on wooden cutlery and provided free stock to 7 businesses in Ucluelet, and 4 businesses in Tofino**. This has been appreciated by all businesses and has helped sway their support towards using this product over plastic, and offering cutlery on request and/or ideally for a fee.





# BUSINESS SUPPORT

ELIMINATING ALL PLASTIC/BIOPLASTIC CUTLERY BEFORE THE END OF 2021

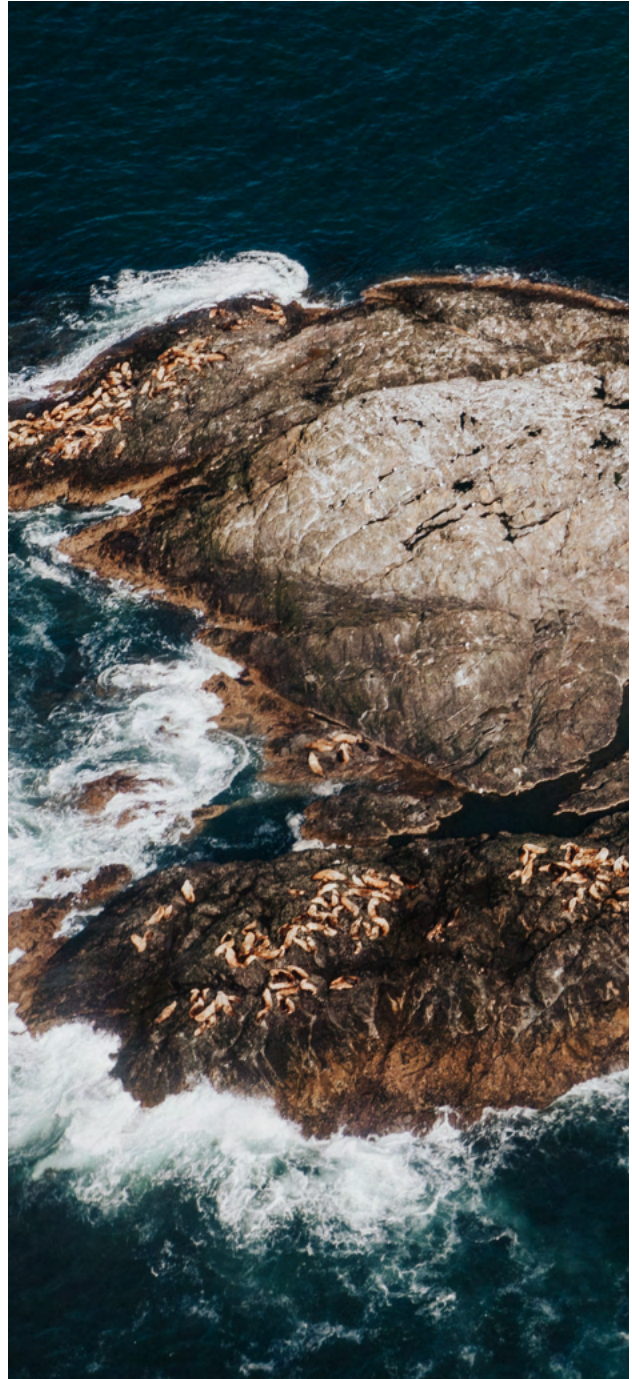
Through our Cut the Cutlery feedback survey, **100% of businesses support a ban on plastic cutlery**

The **Tofino Chamber of Commerce** has specifically consulted with food service businesses and accommodation providers to gain feedback on a plastic cutlery ban, all **feedback from this consultation has come back positive**. We concur that if there were major objections, we would hear about it.

**All Ocean Friendly Businesses** (60 across Tofino and Ucluelet) have provided **support for a ban on plastic cutlery**.

All other non Ocean Friendly Businesses **who have also joined the Cut the Cutlery campaign (42)** support the ban on plastic cutlery.

There are also a **multitude of businesses who do not use plastic/bioplastic cutlery**, this has only impacted food service businesses and some accommodations.



# BUSINESS SUPPORT

QUOTES FROM SUPPORTING BUSINESSES

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Bravocados fully supports a ban on single use plastic cutlery!

We switched to wooden biodegradable cutlery over 2 years ago and have gone on to become L.E.A.F (Leaders in environmentally accountable foodservice) Level 2 certified.

<https://www.leafme.org/>. We would encourage you to take it even further and look towards a ban on plastic ramekins as well as they are prevalent in take out orders which have increased dramatically in the past year.



We use paper ramekins and take out boxes supplied by Far West Distributors out of Ukee.

<https://www.farwestdistributors.ca/>. We are passionate about being the most environmentally sustainable restaurant possible and encourage all restaurants to do their part as well."

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"Yes, we support it [a ban on plastic/bioplastic cutlery]. We support this movement because it is the future. Tofino should be an example of how the world should be operating."





# BUSINESS COMPLIANCE COMPARISON

## CUT THE CUTLERY VS STRAWS SUCK AND BAN THE BAG CAMPAIGNS



Through our **Ban the Bag Campaign**, 15 businesses in Tofino and 11 businesses in Ucluelet weren't compliant at the time of the ban being implemented. Through the **Straws Suck Campaign**, 3 businesses in Tofino and 4 businesses in Ucluelet weren't compliant at the time of the ban being implemented. **Surfrider has worked to support these businesses** through working directly with business owners, managers and their specific supplier representative to switch them on to correct materials, as seen with Gary's Kitchen.

With the **Cut the Cutlery campaign**, there is **far greater compliance amongst the business community**. We've continued to work from the ground up; once we have business compliance and have shifted the culture to a point where the new system is "self-sustaining", we then request for bans on single-use plastic items. This **ban further enforces a cultural shift**, as businesses who refuse to comply become legally obligated, the press generated from the ban informs more residents and visitors about the changes, and Tofino and Ucluelet **increase their ability to positively influence other communities**.



# COMMUNICATIONS

## KEY MESSAGES AND COMMUNICATION VEHICLES

### KEY MESSAGES

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*What's critical, compelling & business oriented*

#### REUSE REVOLUTION

Encourage guests to bring their reusable kit when visiting the coast: bag, mug, bottle, cutlery and container, straw, produce bag.

#### CUT THE CUTLERY

Provide reusable cutlery for dine-in and provide locally compostable takeaway cutlery by request only, and, ideally, for a fee.

#### LIVE LIKE A LOCAL

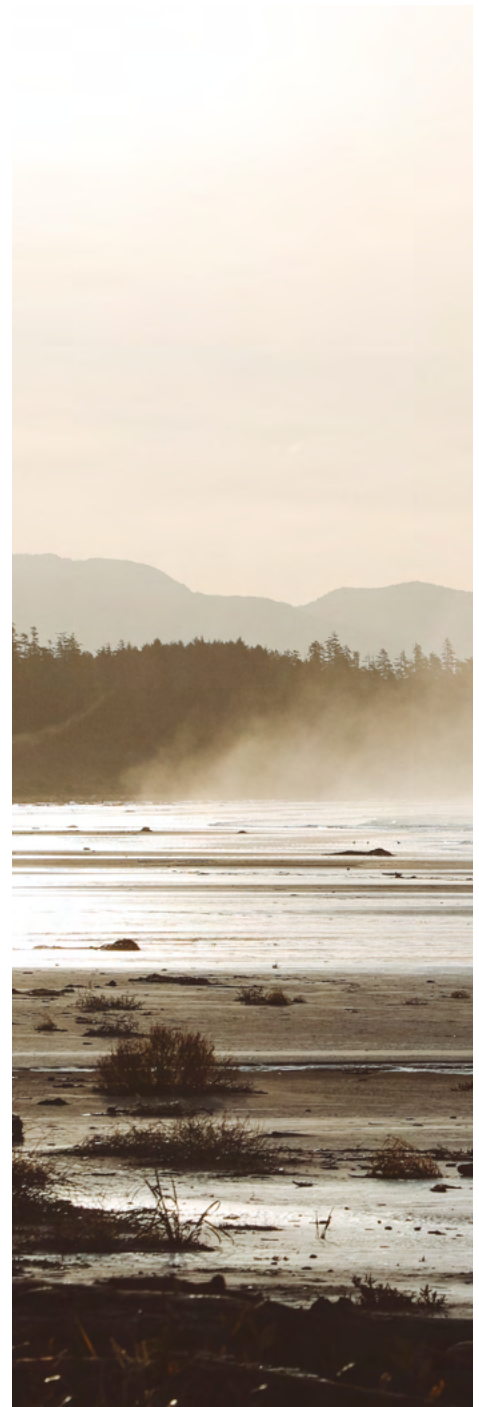
Reminding visitors to do a #5minutebeachclean every time they take a sandy stroll, and to log their data on the Marine Debris Tracker App!

### COMMUNICATIONS VEHICLES

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*Utilized to educate and engage businesses, residents and visitors*

Tofino Time, Westerly News, Tuff City Radio, social media platforms, 1 on 1 business meetings and staff training, public posters, business tent cards (more specific to polystyrene ban and waste management), Surfrider Pacific Rim website, Survey Monkey consultation survey, newsletter (monthly), Tourism Vancouver Island: Ocean Friendly Marketing Campaign, Tofino and Ucluelet Chambers: Direct Mail to all Business Licence holders, Chamber Mail Outs.





# CONCLUSION

## SHIFT CULTURE, SHIFT REGULATIONS



Through our work campaigning to **eliminate single-use plastics on the west coast**, we've realized there are two key pieces for creating systemic change on the local level. This includes 1) **shifting culture** and 2) **shifting regulations**, and these two components are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

This means making zero waste "the **cool and trendy thing to do**", **promoting business champions**, **educating** the community and visitors, and **restoring the local environment from plastic pollution**. Through these actions, we affirm people's sense of worth and identity as it relates to **environmental protection and stewardship**.

We now find ourselves at a pinnacle point, with **businesses and residents ready for a ban on single-use plastic utensils**, and with a climate and environment that is beyond its ability to absorb more negative externalities of our throwaway society. We're grateful for the District of Tofino's and District of Ucluelet's leadership, and **we look forward to taking this next leap!**

“ **WHEN PEOPLE FEEL GOOD AND EMPOWERED, THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO LISTEN AND COLLABORATE ACROSS DIFFERENCES AND SUPPORT GREATER CHANGE**

*Surfrider Pacific Rim*

