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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, June 10, 2019**

## Statement on Federal Announcement on Plastics

K' JIUKTUK (HALIFAX) – We welcome the Federal Government's announcement today that it will ban single-use plastics and introduce extended producer responsibility (EPR) for other plastics and materials.

Reducing plastic use and recycling the plastic we do use need to be top priorities.

The Ecology Action Centre (EAC) is encouraged that the Federal Government is considering banning plastics under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. Plastics are a toxin and should be regulated as such. We tend not to consider plastic as a toxin as we would oil or other hazardous substances, but a plastic bag in the environment is just an oil spill in slow motion. Science is revealing the long-term impacts of micro-plastics on wildlife, the environment and now on human health

Much of the recent concern around plastics has emanated from growing plastic pollution in our oceans. We know that in Atlantic Canada the fishing industry is a major source of plastic in Atlantic Canadian waters. It is our assessment that along with education and stricter enforcement, extended producer responsibility for fishing gear will be the most effective way to reduce the loss of fishing gear, such as rope and traps. Along with the fishing industry, it is time for the companies making fishing gear to take more responsibility.

The announcement lacks specifics which are key to developing effective regulations and programs. In addition, there is a lack of detail on timelines and implementation could take up to two years or more.

We are heartened to read in the Backgrounder that a scientific assessment of plastic in the environment is already underway.

It is key that the Federal Government work with provinces and municipalities but at the same time resist any efforts from other levels of government or the plastics industry to weaken regulations. Following the lead of the European Union is important.

Last week Environment Canada released a report on the economic opportunity associated with recycling here in Canada the plastic we do use. We support efforts to develop a Canadian recycling industry rather than landfilling, exporting or burning plastic waste.

Canadians have clearly expressed their concern about plastic pollution. EAC salutes all the groups and initiatives that have sprung up across Nova Scotia and Canada to reduce our use of plastics and prevent further plastic pollution and encourages further engagement and vigilance.