

Circular Economy Leadership Coalition



MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

The Circular Economy Leadership Coalition

The Circular Economy Leadership Coalition (CELC) is a not-for-profit alliance of corporate and NGO leaders, think tanks and sustainability experts who believe Canada can be a world leader in adopting sustainable, prosperous, zero-waste, low-carbon-emitting solutions for a global Circular Economy.

The coalition will play a key role in fostering collaboration among industries, experts, communities and all levels of government in the development and implementation of new Circular Economy solutions that protect and regenerate our natural environment while enhancing prosperity.

CELC founding members include Unilever Canada, IKEA Canada, Loblaw Companies Limited, Walmart Canada, NEI Investments LP, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), National Zero Waste Council (NZWC), Smart Prosperity Institute, The Natural Step Canada and Institut EDDEC - Environment, sustainable development and the Circular Economy (I-EDDEC).

The Linear Economy

In a linear economy, products are manufactured, used and discarded. It is a “take-make-dispose” model. Its reliance on increasingly scarce and deceptively inexpensive inputs creates economic and ecological instability. It also generates considerable waste. Local governments in Canada spend approximately \$3.2-billion annually managing 34 million tonnes of waste. The University of Georgia engineering professor Jenna Jambeck has estimated the world has produced more than 8 billion metric tons of plastic since the 1950s – the equivalent of four Mount Everests.

The Stockholm Resilience Centre has calculated that without increased resource efficiency, total global demand for limited resource stocks (such as metals, biomass, minerals) will reach 130 billion tons by 2050 (up from 50 billion in 2014), exceeding the Earth’s total capacity by a physically impossible 400 per cent.

Paul Ekins, professor of resources and environment policy at University College London and member of the UN Environment’s International Resource Panel, has examined current business-as-usual projections up to 2050. His research findings show a “nightmare” of price volatilities as finite resources run out leading to interruptions in supply chains, lower output and fewer jobs than can be expected from a Circular Economy.

The Circular Economy

A Circular Economy means transforming the way we design, produce and use products with the goals of eliminating waste, keeping materials in high-value use, and contributing to the regeneration of natural systems.

It is much more than just recycling. It relies on a combination of strategies and innovative business models that close material loops, and focus on optimizing resource flows, decreasing the need for virgin resource use, and reducing a range of environmental impacts including greenhouse gas emissions.

The Circular Economy approach decouples economic growth from the extraction of finite natural resources and is underpinned by a complete transition to renewable energy.

Implementing a Circular Economy presents significant economic opportunities. Through innovation, job creation and resource shortage mitigation, current Circular Economy practices will give rise to upwards of US\$4.5-trillion in economic activity by 2030.

Benefits for Canada

For Canadian businesses the Circular Economy provides a pathway to sustainability and enhanced competitiveness by lowering input and manufacturing costs, building resilient supply chains, responding to increased consumer awareness, opening new markets and increasing market share.

Canada is currently far behind other regions such as China, Japan, the UK and the EU in embracing the Circular Economy, including regulations and incentives to support businesses. Reducing pollution and environmental damage caused by unsustainable resource extraction, product use and waste generation, the implementation of a Circular Economy would place Canada on a more sustainable long-term path and help the government meet its greenhouse gas reduction targets.

About the CELC

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For more information

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