



Statistics
Canada

Statistique
Canada

Speaking notes for

Notes d'allocution de

Jennifer Withington

Acting Assistant Chief Statistician

Remarks for submission to
The Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development
Regarding the audit by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development

May 2, 2024

Text length: 570 words

***Please check
against delivery***

***Le discours
prononcé fait foi***

Canada

Serving Canada with
high-quality statistical
information that matters.

Au service du Canada avec des
renseignements statistiques de
grande qualité qui comptent.

Introduction

Honourable Committee Chair and Members

It is truly an honour and a pleasure to be with you today to speak about Statistics Canada's role in **Advancing a Circular Plastics Economy for Canada**. Our main contribution to this Treasury Board funded horizontal initiative is the expansion of knowledge on plastics in the economy and the environment. The main product that we have developed for this initiative is the Physical Flow Account for Plastic Material (PFAPM). I am extremely proud of the work that we have accomplished to produce this new account, which reports on 18 variables that describe the production and fate of plastic products in the Canadian economy across a time series from 2012 to 2020 for 14 product types at the provincial and territorial level and for 19 resin types at the national level.

I am here today in front of the esteemed Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development because Statistics Canada was a part of the audit conducted by the Office of the Auditor General. In response to the report, I would like to share four key messages.

First, Statistics Canada is constantly innovating by using relevant and timely data sources to report on the subjects that matter to Canadians, such as plastics pollution. The agency is dedicated to delivering the necessary data to support policies that aim to achieve the goal of zero plastic waste and will adapt as needed to meet this objective.

Second, Statistics Canada accepts the findings of the report and is committed to providing the data necessary to support the Zero Plastic Waste Horizontal Initiative. The agency will continue its work with Environment and Climate Change Canada to identify and mitigate risks to data deliverables.

Third, in response to the finding that Statistics Canada's PFAPM has a delay of 3 years and 3 months from the time of data collection, we understand that this delay may seem like a long time. However, the PFAPM is as current as the data sources used in its compilation allow. The PFAPM relies on multiple internal and external data sources that

2024/05/02

are made available significantly later than the reference year. The account is finalized approximately 4 months after receipt of all data.

Finally, in response to the finding that data on plastic pollution from marine-based sources remains a data gap: our partners at ECCC have been working to identify data sources for plastics in or around bodies of water, to better inform the Zero Plastic Waste Horizontal Initiative. Statistics Canada will incorporate these sources into its data products once they become available.

In closing, I would like to say that data is the cornerstone of any public policy. High-quality data and insights should play a leading role as we work towards reducing plastic waste in the Canadian landscape. Statistics Canada's 100 plus years of experience and world leading expertise has put us into an excellent position to produce the PFAPM, which is the most comprehensive product possible given the current data landscape. We will remain flexible so that we can expand and improve the account, as new data sources become available or as data needs change. We encourage our policy department partners to draw upon the PFAPM as the key data source for plastics in Canada.

Thank you again for the opportunity to discuss Statistics Canada's work towards **Advancing a Circular Plastics Economy for Canada**. My colleague(s) and I would be glad to take any questions.