



Francis Scarpaleggia, Chair  
Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

April 30, 2021

Dear Mr. Scarpaleggia and Committee members,

I am writing on behalf of Canada's fresh fruit and vegetable industry regarding the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development study on single-use plastics.

The Canadian produce industry continues to be 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, while also considering the food safety and food security implications of reducing the use of an essential technology for fresh produce.

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, such as light-weighting, reducing the volume of plastic per unit sold; manufacturing packaging from polymers that are more economically viable to recycle; inclusion of post-consumer recycled (PCR) content in produce packaging; designing for recycling, such as replacing multi-resin laminates with mono-resin laminated packaging; incorporating packaging design and materials into procurement decisions; and providing customers with the opportunity to buy items loose and take them home in their own reusable containers.

In June 2020, 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* was published last November, designed to 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.

While our work supports an environment of innovation and collaboration that the Government can harness and build upon to effectively reduce the use of unnecessary and problematic plastics, we also need to address the challenge of fragmented collection system across the country that do not effectively collect and recycle the materials currently in circulation that could be kept and utilized in the circular economy.

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 the Committee to examine mechanisms to mitigate the use of unnecessary and problematic plastics in Canada. CPMA and our members are ready and willing to be active partners in finding effective and workable solutions to these challenges. We would welcome the opportunity to appear before the Committee to discuss these important issues further and to answer any questions Committee members may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Lemaire', followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Ron Lemaire  
President  
Canadian Produce Marketing Association

**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 800 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.