Addressing Abandoned Vessels, Marine Debris and Marine-sourced Plastics

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Coast Waste Management Association Annual Conference
October 25, 2019
The Problem

• Over 1400 abandoned vessels, concerns:
  – oils spills, garbage, may sink
• Tonnes of marine debris every year
• Adverse Impacts to:
  – culture and economy
  – tourism, shellfish industry
  – environment, marine ecosystem, whales
• Lack of jurisdictional clarity and coordination
2019 Background

• Intense 4 month project to gather and consolidate information
• Nanaimo MLA Sheila Malcolmson parliamentary secretary for environment
  – recommendations to the Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
• Summer 2019: Conversations, site visits and clean-ups
• September 25: Fall Progress Report released as a snapshot of What We Heard
Terms of Reference

• Make recommendations
  – to eliminate the environmental threats caused by abandoned vessels, look at:
    • boat licensing
    • boat dismantling and recycling of boats
    • cash for clunkers
    • Washington State experience
  – for provincial action to curb the disposal of plastics in the marine environment
What We Heard - General

• Ocean health and clean shorelines are vital to our well-being
• Coordination with federal agencies and local governments is required for success
• Volunteers are crucial
What We Heard - Gaps

- Governance
- Prevention
- Infrastructure
- Compliance and Enforcement
- Legacy Backlogs
What We Heard - Gaps

The province could:

• Improve prevention and reduction
• Facilitate recycling
• Ensure disposal options are available
• Foster innovative solutions for marine debris
What we heard – Success Stories

• Innovative technologies, like the Seabin
• Ocean Legacy’s Marine Debris Sorting Centre
• Impressive community beach clean-ups
• Groups are assessing and removing abandoned vessels
What We Heard – Areas Showing Progress

- Styrofoam™ encapsulation or alternatives are industry standard
- Projects tackling Ghost Fishing gear
- Increasing awareness
- Research occurring in recycling: plastic, fishing gear and fibreglass
What We Heard – Longer Term Challenges

• Alternatives to landfilling
• Vessel licensing improvements
• Boat dismantling infrastructure
• Extended Producer Responsibility programs for marine plastics
Plastics Action Plan – Four Key Areas

1) Bans on Single-Use Packaging
2) Dramatically Reduce Single-Use Plastic in Landfills & Waterways
3) Expanding Plastic Bottle and Beverage Container Returns
4) Reducing Plastics Overall

https://cleanbc.gov.bc.ca/plastics
Next steps

• Final Report
  – Incorporate findings, earlier requests and on-going work:
  – Make recommendations for path forward

• Parliamentary Secretary Sheila Malcolmson
  – Present final report to Minister George Heyman
Contact Information

• Webpage:
  – gov.bc.ca/MarineDebrisProtection
  – Fall 2019 Progress Report

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