



## Budget 2023 Consultation

### Written Submission Template

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As participation in the budget consultation continues to increase each year, the Committee has looked at ways to simplify and standardize the consultation process to ensure everyone has the opportunity to participate effectively. This includes the creation of a form for written input and information in support of a presentation. Please note that the preferred method to provide the Committee with a submission is through our online submission form, available through a link on our [website](#).

The Committee thanks all British Columbians for their continued participation in the annual budget consultation.

#### **Instructions:**

Please provide your comments by filling out this submission form.

You may provide up to three recommendations (maximum 50 words each) along with your explanation for each recommendation (maximum 300 words each). Should you submit more than three recommendations, additional recommendations will not be considered part of your formal submission and may only be reviewed for informational purposes.

Please note, the order of recommendations does not reflect priority.

Please ensure that your recommendations and explanation are captured within the body of the submission. Information provided through links will not be considered to form part of the submission and may only be reviewed for further interest.

If you require assistance or support to make a submission, please contact the Parliamentary Committees Office at 250-356-2933 or 1-877-428-8337 (toll-free in BC).

## Submission Form

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### Introduction (100-word limit)

Indicate who the submission is from, i.e., whether from you in a personal capacity or sent on behalf of an organization, and any relevant background information.

The Surfrider Foundation is a nonprofit grassroots organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our world's ocean, waves and beaches for all people through a powerful activist network. Surfrider Foundation Canada (SFC) is part of the global Surfrider community of international affiliates located in countries around the world. SFC has three local volunteer-run chapters based in Tofino/Ucluelet (Pacific Rim Chapter), Victoria (Vancouver Island Chapter) and Vancouver and two school clubs at the University of Victoria and Ucluelet Secondary School. SFC focuses on several key environmental issues, including plastics reduction, ocean protection, beach access, coastal preservation and water quality.

### Recommendation 1 (50-word limit)

Develop a program for commercial fishing and aquaculture gear used in British Columbia (B.C.) industry that will reduce gear loss, support recovery of gear from the marine environment and enable proper processing and end of life management of retrieved materials.

### Recommendation 1 Explanation (300-word limit)

Abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) is a major issue on B.C. shorelines. For over 10 years, SFC chapters have performed shoreline cleanups in settled and remote areas of the province. Time and time again, ALDFG from the commercial fishing and aquaculture industries have dominated the results of these volunteer-led cleanups. The impact of ALDFG has also been documented in the results of the Clean Coast Clean Waters (CCCW) initiative funded by the Province of B.C., a groundbreaking program supporting industries and communities that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to perform shoreline cleanup projects in 2020 and 2021. The full results from CCCW are forthcoming, but early results from several projects shows that the volume of ALDFG vastly exceeds the volume of single-use plastic packaging material and other types of plastic.

The single-use plastic policies that the Province has introduced show leadership in addressing plastic pollution. But it's clear that these materials are only a small component of the plastic pollution found in the B.C. marine environment. More needs to be done to prevent ALDFG pollution upstream to truly reduce plastic pollution in B.C.

The Province has an exceptional track record with implementing successful pollution prevention programs for a wide variety of materials. There are known tools that could be used to prevent, recover and manage ALDFG pollution, such as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), deposit-refund, gear registration, etc. ALDFG is not currently addressed in the Province's 5-year EPR Plan or other policy documents. The Province has an opportunity to apply its expertise in pollution prevention and show leadership in tackling one of the biggest impacts to the coastal environment.

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**Recommendation 2** (50-word limit)

Develop policies and systems that improve the environmental monitoring, regulation, and enforcement of pre-consumer plastic production pellets (nurdles).

**Recommendation 2 Explanation** (300-word limit)

Pre-consumer plastic production pellets (nurdles) are being discharged into British Columbia waterways by plastic manufacturing facilities. Facilities on the Fraser River have been spilling plastic pellets at their facilities for years, which wash down storm drains.

SFC Chapters have researched this issue for many years, mapping locations around Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, San Juan Islands, Sunshine Coast, and the Lower Mainland where pre-consumer plastic pellets are washing up on waterfronts. SFC has found direct evidence that these plastic pellets are entering the marine environment from plastic production facilities in the Lower Mainland, particularly along multiple arms of the Fraser River.

Nurdles devastate the environment and marine life but, despite being one of the biggest sources of pollution in our oceans, they are often overlooked. Often mistaken for fish eggs, nurdles are ingested by seabirds and fish, causing malnutrition and starvation. The high concentrations of environmental pollutants they absorb, in addition to chemicals used during their production, also find their way into marine creatures. Not only do these harmful substances then build up in the food chain, they can also enter human bodies, through the fish and seafood we eat, causing a variety of problems.

More needs to be done to address this critical issue. Environmental monitoring and enforcement of this issue has been limited, but needs to increase. Requirements to make sure mitigation efforts are properly implemented at these facilities also need to switch from a voluntary (e.g. Operation Clean Sweep) to a mandatory approach. This would help reduce plastic pellet pollution that is accumulating in rivers and on the coast and impacting marine life.

**Recommendation 3** (50-word limit)

Develop policies and programs that prioritize the reduction of cigarette butt litter.

**Recommendation 3 Explanation** (300-word limit)

Year after year, the number one type of plastic pollution found on Canadian shorelines is cigarette butts. Cigarette butts are a pervasive, long-lasting, and toxic form of marine debris. They primarily reach our waterways through improper disposal on beaches, rivers, and anywhere on land, transported to our coasts by runoff and stormwater. Cigarettes contain over thousands of chemicals, many of which are carcinogenic. When smoked, these chemicals are collected by the cigarette butt. When the butts end up in our environment, these chemicals can gradually leach into our waterways and are then absorbed by fish and other marine animals.

SFC Chapters have implemented cigarette butt collection and recycling programs in several B.C. communities through the Hold On To Your Butt program, resulting in millions of butts being recycled instead of ending up in the waterways. Regardless, cigarette butts continue to plague the marine environment in these and other communities across B.C.

More needs to be done to prevent butt pollution and capture what does get littered. Several options are available to increase the prevention of cigarette butt waste, including developing biodegradable filters, increasing fines and penalties for littering butts, EPR, monetary deposits on filters, increasing availability of butt receptacles, and expanded public education. There may also be opportunities to increase the capture of butts in stormwater management systems.

Cigarette butts are the most common and arguably the most toxic form of plastic pollution. Implementing policies or programs that reduce cigarette butt pollution across all B.C. communities presents a huge opportunity for the Province to demonstrate major leadership in reducing plastic pollution.

In order to process your completed submission, this form should be emailed to: [financecommittee@leg.bc.ca](mailto:financecommittee@leg.bc.ca) with your name, organization (if submitting on behalf of an organization); mailing address and phone number.

As well, we require your acknowledgement that you have read our [privacy policy](#) (required in order to formally receive your submission). We also seek your permission to post your submission on the Committee's website following the release of the Budget 2023 Consultation Report (please note that we only post submissions where consent has been received).

☒ I have read and agreed to the Privacy Policy of the Parliamentary Committees Office.

☒ I consent to having my submission posted on the Legislative Assembly website.