

Personal Consumption Action Plan for January – Reduce Household Waste **Kathryn Hazel, Environmental Justice Committee**

It's time for New Year's resolutions, and here's one the Environmental Justice Committee would like us all to make: reduce your household waste as part of your personal climate action plan.

The best gift for the planet would be to cut back on our individual consumption, and only buy what we truly need, not want. That's difficult in a society that constantly urges us to buy more. So how do we do that?

First, stop and think before you buy something new. Use what you have. The average Canadian throws out 37 kilograms of clothing a year, most of which could be reused or recycled. My personal rule is that I can only buy something new if something else leaves my closet, usually to a thrift shop.

Second, reduce your amount of food waste. The average Canadian throws out 79 kilograms of food a year, 20 kilograms more than Americans do! More than 60 per cent of all food waste in our country comes from individual households.

Yes, you can compost those soggy lettuce leaves and ancient vegetables lurking in the bottom of your fridge's produce drawer, but making a grocery list and checking it twice, plus planning meals, will cut back on a lot of food that now goes into our garbage dump – oops, landfill.

Third, buy real soap, not body washes in plastic containers, which are mostly water, not soap. Purchase laundry strips instead of plastic jugs of laundry detergent. And whenever possible, buy products from companies that are committed to sustainable practices, such as recyclable packaging.

And finally, join a Buy Nothing Facebook group in Nanaimo, where you can gift your unwanted household items to someone who can use them. I had a whole package of wood flooring left over from a renovation that had sat in my storage room gathering dust for a couple of years.

I posted an ad for it on the Buy Nothing Harewood Facebook site and it quickly found a wonderful home as new cupboard doors and siding in the kitchen of a wee house being rented at a below-market rate to a young tenant. A win-win all around!

Reducing your household waste will help you organize your closets, clean out your fridge, declutter your storage room, and just plain make you feel good. What's not to like about that?

Here are some links to additional resources, plus a fun song:

[Canada Post red dot program](#) for stopping bulk mail deliveries to your post box

Textiles usage https://thetyee.ca/News/2021/02/12/Reduce-Textile-Trash-Start-Small-Think-Local/?utm_source=weekly&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=150221

Don't throw it away

song https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZdNipkansw&feature=emb_logo&fbclid=IwAR3s1wd9Ar2qE-1sQzN8j42JSZejtYI_9wTJWaA4SrVu_Wjv4FyCZQ7IL8o

<https://www.yesmagazine.org/issue/solving-plastic/2021/05/10/how-to-get-rid-of-throwaway-culture?fbclid=IwAR0Sgo7q08HUeSxqxYCIPT5Bo7VUwuOc-zPs9fclKxyd01qrqsa5L5dq4vY>