

# QUALITY OF LIFE? **WE CAN DO BETTER!**



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## BEST OF LUCK ON BAG BAN

James Beddome, Green Party of Manitoba (GPM) Leader sends his best wishes to Liberal Leader Jon Gerrard in his quest with Bill 200 to have a “plastic check-out bags prohibited” in Manitoba.

“Inaction is not an option.” asserted Beddome, “The proliferation of plastics in the past fifty years has led to problems such as the continent-sized islands of garbage swirling around in our oceans with the resultant plastic all too often being ingested by marine wildlife. Close to home, our fences and trees are often littered with plastic bags. Additionally it is becoming increasingly clear that when this plastic finally does break down it leaches toxins harming both the health of the planet and human health. Hopefully the Legislature takes this matter seriously, quits stalling and looks beyond petty party politics.”

Beddome, however, expressed some reservations about the proposed bill. “Obviously the more widespread adoption of cloth bags is the best option available, but the proposed bill is only aimed at prohibiting “non-recyclable” and “non-biodegradable” bags. This misses the point. Most plastic bags are already recyclable but the costs associated with collection and recycling do not make recycling feasible. The introduction of biodegradable bags is a good idea but this needs to go in tandem with an adequately funded province-wide composting program. This means the province needs to do more than throw the usual few thousand dollars here and there to fund demonstration composting programs.”

“The Green Party of Manitoba would introduce more thoughtful legislation. We should be looking at reducing society's generation of waste in general. We should be moving away from the use of harmful plastics in general rather than narrow-mindedly focussing on only a small, but visible, portion of the problem.”

In 1989 the then Progressive Conservative Government committed itself to reducing the amount of waste going to landfills by 50% by 2000, but they failed, only managing to achieve a 20% reduction. Waste diversion has stagnated further under NDP watch. In 2005 Resource Conservation Manitoba challenged the NDP to 'regain the lead in waste minimization' by obtaining a 50% reduction in waste going to landfills by 2010.

“As 2010 nears it is clear that we are no further ahead in waste reduction than we were a decade ago. I wonder when we will ever hit this target under the present government?” Beddome questioned.

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