

Request to Speak to Committee of Council

Submitted on Wednesday, November 4, 2020 - 1:11 pm

==Committee Requested==

Committee: Public Works Committee

==Requestor Information==

Name of Individual: Alex Xia

Name of Organization: Greener Days (Non-profit environmental organization)

Contact Number: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Mailing Address:
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Reason(s) for delegation request: Thank you for your time! I am very interested in speaking for an environmental idea. If there is an environmental meeting/committee, that would be great!

Basically, my topic is marker recycling. I want to tell the city that we should be recycling our markers after we are finished using them and I would want to try to convince the city why they should participate and do something. Markers create huge sources of pollution, and I thought that this was a subject that received very little attention but also affects the planet in large ways.

I would love for the chance to speak about this. If you have any questions, please ask me! Thank you so much!

Will you be requesting funds from the City? No

Will you be submitting a formal presentation? Yes

Marker Recycling

Hamilton Waste Management Advisory Committee

Written Delegation Submission

November 30th, 2020

Dear Hamilton,

Sharpie. Crayola. Prang. Bic.

It never matters what company's markers you are using right now. They are all in this together. The issue of marker waste affects all of us. Young or old. Small or big.

Marker waste is a topic that receives little attention by the world. But are they really much less harmful than a plastic water bottle put in the garbage bin?

Is a wasted marker any less harmful than incinerating garbage from the landfill?

It's more than possible that I am the first person to talk to you about the issue of marker waste. It's more than possible that I am the first person because this is such a minor topic that it can be achieved with the snap of a finger.

But I've been spending many months emailing companies, cities like yours, and organizations. Some of them like the idea of marker recycling, while some others think it is too costly or simply not a priority at the moment.

All of those reasons are completely acceptable. But what I've learned is that if marker recycling was as easy as people think, then many more organizations would be participating in it. It may not be as easy as you would dream of, and I learned that through all these calls and messages I've participated in. But maybe you could think a little differently. I'm going to provide a lot of facts that happen when everyone in Hamilton recycles just one marker. If you think that these benefits are worth it already, then making the decision to implement marker recycling at public facilities will be the easiest one you ever made. *Begin.*

By the time you put a cardboard box in the library, it will be when residents start streaming in the doors to start their day. Many families and people pass the beautifully designed box in their haste to start reading. But one bright-eyed child spots the colorful message along with her parents. She says something to her parents that nobody else in the building can hear.

Days pass, and the child finally returns, armed with a small bag of markers by her side. With a gentile *plop*, in they go. Resting in the box waiting for something to happen.

Little did that girl know that by placing her used coloring markers in that bin, she was helping to generate enough power to make an entire breakfast. Little did she know that as soon as she placed her markers into the bin, somebody else noticed the colorful sign and took a picture of it.

The picture spread around the neighborhood like wildfire, and believe it or not, many other people stepped in to help. Soon, everyone saw the sign on websites, their phones, or in person at the same library where it all started. That was the second where marker recycling could start to show the world how powerful it was.

That story was a simple way to tell you the impact just putting a box where people could see it can be. Because people have phones nowadays. They have social media. Everyone, really, has a desire to help the planet, deep down. Marker recycling will do more than just recycle a marker. It can bring people together. It can make a child who never thought of the environment much before do wonderful things. Marker recycling can unlock our inner love of nature.

A marker weighs six grams if you just count the plastic. But that also means that six grams of valuable polypropylene are wasted *forever* when anyone drops a marker into the garbage bin. These six grams of plastic will never be able to be used by anybody living on this planet in the future. Throwing away a marker means that you've wasted six grams of our planet's resources. That is something that nothing can buy.

The total population of Hamilton is around 767,000 people. All I need you to do right now is to agree that more or less, every single resident in Hamilton would use at least one marker per year and then throw it away. Do you agree with that? Good.

If my calculations are correct, then 767,000 markers recycled can make the equivalent of **9,387 liters of fuel** that can power cars. In addition to that, recycling this number of markers each year means that:

- 4,602,000 grams of plastic can be saved per year from going to landfills;
- The consumer who buys the recycled plastic will be 20% happier in regards to sustainability when compared to buying a regular plastic product.
- 27,612 kilograms worth of Carbon Dioxide emissions can be cut out;
- 341,928,600 kilojoules of energy can be saved;
- 9,204 kilograms of petroleum can be saved;
- 828,360 liters of water can be saved.

All these things and much more can be saved when marker recycling starts in Hamilton.

COST:

By doing some research, I found out the cost if the public themselves paid for marker recycling for every single main public facility. There are 44 main libraries and community centers in Hamilton. The cost of a large box for marker recycling would be \$220 Canadian Dollars. That means that in total, the cost of marker recycling for the entire city would be **\$9,680**. That's a lot of markers able to be recycled! However, once again, this is if the public paid for the boxes. The city will get a discount if they talk with TerraCycle, the company that recycles these markers.

TERRACYCLE:

The city of Hamilton should be familiar with TerraCycle and its values. They are a company that specializes in recycling hard to dispose of materials. One of their specialties is marker and pen

recycling as well. What happens is that we pay for the boxes, and the price we pay covers everything in the whole process, from top to bottom. When we fully fill up the boxes, we can ship it to TerraCycle's facility that will shred, grind, and pelletize these plastics until they are suitable for melting. When companies who want to sell recycled plastic products purchase these plastics from TerraCycle, they can use the plastic to make their products, which in turn makes customers happier.

So, I just mentioned the cost and the company that does this work. I do understand that sometimes these costs may be too high for the city, and they may not want to join in on this. **But there is another project called the Crayola ColorCycle project** which basically does the same thing as TerraCycle, but they change the plastic by directly melting it down into oil. A diesel fuel, to be exact, that has the ability to power daily objects like school buses.

However, they stand out in that fact that this is a FREE program, so we can collect all the markers we want and then send it to Crayola for free.

Dear Hamilton, do you now understand the value of recycling a marker?

Do you now understand the value of recycling a marker?

It may only be a tube of plastic that can be thrown away in a millisecond, but if we took just a little bit of time. If we just stopped for a minute and organized this project. If we...

A marker is nothing short of brilliant potential. It has the ability to be transformed into a pair of shoes, or perhaps an awesome new board game. A marker has all the potential we are willing to allow it.

I have a question: do you yourself use a lot of markers? Do you know anyone who uses a lot of markers? Or maybe not even markers. Do you use a lot of plastic products that can be recycled but often aren't?

How long do you use these plastics for?

Because plastics have technically been here since the dinosaurs roamed the planet. They have been with us through every hurricane, every war, every human being on this planet. So, when you use a plastic material for even 2 years, and then throw it away, something that took 65 million years to be made is gone forever in basically, 1 second.

Recycling a marker means we do not have to extract new fossil fuels from our planet, year after year, in order to satisfy our growing demand for markers. If we all recycled our markers completely, then we would never have to mine for new plastic to make new markers again!

And although I do not have the power to make the whole world listen to me, I still have something right now. I have *you*, who is reading these words right this moment. My power to change the world, quite literally, is *you*. *You* are the one who can make marker recycling a reality. The one who can save our Sea Turtles, our greenery, our planet.

They say that words are the most powerful weapon in the world. But today, in this Delegation, I do not think that my 1,480 words were enough to convince you to make change.

I simply must convince you to do this. So, let me use the most powerful tool in the world to me. My heart.

A student throws away a marker into the garbage just as the teacher tells the class how 10,000 people die from air pollution each day.

Somebody tells me that sorting their recycling is too much work, yet another pleads with me to help their sick mother who lived next door to the *Estrutural* landfill in Brasilia for 20 years.

I see a marker lying there on the road and then go home and hear how 11 billion tons of ice melted from Greenland that same day.

“Hope is lost if we allow it to be lost”, says the author.

And then I see a cardboard box at my school that has two words on it. MARKER RECYCLING. These two words were enough to make me think, “As long as there was somebody who loved our planet so much that they spent their energy to make this project a reality, hope shall never, ever be lost.”

And that was exactly what made me love our planet so much today.

Dear Hamilton,

Those words were from my heart. The truest tool of them all. If that wasn't enough to convince you that we need to recycle our markers, then there is nothing more I can ever do.

A cardboard box, some used markers, and a desire to help is all it takes.

My name is Alex, I am 14 years old, and I have an unerring desire to help every creature that inhabits this planet. Will you be the one who can make that dream come true?

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Alex Xia

P.S: Thank *you* for your time. Apart from the heart, that is the second most powerful tool in the world to me.