



Jennifer Wyness, Ward 2 Councillor

Single Use Strategy on Afternoons with Rob Brakenridge

**Transcript from interview on Afternoons with Rob Brakenridge (QR Calgary 770 AM) on October 11th 2022*

Rob: One of the dissenting voices on Council, in a vote of 11-4 with the Motion passing, Councillor Wyness was one of the 4 “no” votes. We call this the Waste Reduction Strategy and it has different components, including these fees – what’s your understanding of what the point of the intent of this is?

Cllr Wyness: Redundancy. The biggest challenge is when Council asked Administration on whether Calgarians already doing this, by our own metrics, more than 50% of Calgarians are doing this – with Admin confirming a success rate would be 50%. Why are we adding the minimum fee? It is also limited to brick & mortar stores in Calgary. If you do any online shopping, your single use plastics will be allowed to show up at your front door, but if you go into a store, you are actually being charged a minimum fee (which will increase to \$0.25) on plastic alternatives. We’ve banned plastics, the Feds have said no more plastics, and now these single use items are all compostable, such as a paper bag. Rob: Right, and it seems that we want people using paper/reusable bags as an alternative to plastic, so why the fee then?

Cllr Wyness: One of the arguments was small businesses were struggling on the price of bags, but then by setting the minimum fee, we’ve actually increased the price of wholesale bags because now you know what businesses can charge. The other thing is when you’re able to pocket the difference and you can ship bags from China to try to find a cheaper rate, we’ve only added an inflationary pressure on businesses and on Calgarians purchasing.

Rob: What were your concerns about this approach and why did you vote against this?

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Rob: What were your concerns about this approach and why did you vote against this?

Cllr Wyness: And don't forget to ask for your forks, because under this bylaw, you will be having to ask for any single use item at the drive thru. And if you forget and drive away, please don't get mad at the drive-thru staff. It is part of this policy that is coming forward, so remember that you're going to have to be asking for more single-use products if you need it.

Rob: At the end of incorporating more compostable alternatives into this, and I think it's Federal rules that are preventing stores like Co-op from offering these compostable grocery bags at the checkout, and that weird situation where they can sell them in bulk, but they can't give them out at the checkout – why can't this be more of a part of the solution?

Cllr Wyness: I think it should have been, and I think we had time to do our homework on this policy to advocate for changes that we see are actually going to help Calgarians and meet our climate goals. And we didn't do that, and I think the Feds still have an opportunity to address some of the compostable plastic alternatives, and that research needs to be done. How are we incentivizing innovation as we move forward, trying to address climate change? And I think when we start making policies such as this that's that mandatory minimum, we're not opening the markets for alternatives. And the customers have already started to adapt to this. It seems like a weird redundancy to have happen when the conversation was plastics, we need to do bio-degradable, we then send it to our compost facility, the compost facility then sells our compost, Calgarians get compost, then that goes and grows a plant, which is also a carbon capture. How are we ensuring that each decision we make truly has that climate impact? I'm just not seeing it in this policy.

Rob: When does the bylaw come back?

Cllr Wyness: We're going to have a year feedback, which is great. I hope Calgarians help shape this

bylaw and let us know what they would like to see. Do businesses want us to set the minimum charge? I think it's a great opportunity for Calgarians to let the City know how we should actually address our climate change goals and make great policy that incentivizes innovation.

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