

Mayor Salci, Members of Council. Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you this evening. My name is Chris Colaneri, and I am Harish Aggarwal and we are here representing the Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee. Before we begin, we would like to play a short excerpt from a 2008 Good Morning America new piece called "The Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Please have a look."

CLIP WILL PLAY

As you can see there is substance and a global environmental need behind our support of this request. Last spring the Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee came to you with our request to ban the use of plastic bags. You have done the right thing and heard from the public. We are asking you to make the right decision again and eliminate the sale of plastic bottles in Niagara Falls. As you heard, globally, less than 5% of plastic is actually recycled so we should take a small step to improve this and help set an example. 26 other municipalities across Canada have already taken part in the initiative and it's about time that we do the same.

Our initiative in the Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee is "Youth Voice" which is why we have to speak out on this issue. This may not affect you in your lifetime but many of you are parents or grandparents and your children are the ones that will be affected by your decision. The youth should have the same opportunities as everyone else and have a healthy environment to live in. We look to you, the leaders of today, to take leadership roles and make the right decisions quickly. We truly believe that we need to accept responsibility at the local level in order to change things on the national level. This is a large issue but it is not past the point where we cannot change it. But we have to act quickly and efficiently. We have taken huge steps and taken on huge initiatives to improve our environment in other ways so why not take another?

With your vote you can reduce the stress on the environment that is created by plastic bottles. Niagara Falls is a tourist destination because of the beauty of the environment but most importantly it is our home. Changing our behaviour is our only hope! You are voting for the youth and we trust you, our leaders, to make the right decision. Thank you.