Communications and Environment

Edmonton Diocesan Council

**2016.02 Reducing the Impact of Disposable Hygiene Products**

**Whereas,** Use of disposable hygiene products (DHPs) can lead to landfill, environmental, and health issues; and

**Whereas,** Every household uses some form of DHPs, from diapers to menstrual products to incontinence products; and

**Whereas,** The average woman disposes of 300 pounds of feminine hygiene products in her life; and over twelve billion sanitary napkins and seven billion tampons enter the landfills in North America every year; and

**Whereas,** Women are the primary purchasers of these products for the home; therefore, be it

**Resolved,** That the Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada, in 69th annual convention assembled, urge companies that manufacture these products to invest in research to bring new, safe, healthy, biodegradable products to the market place; and be it further

**Resolved,** That the Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada, in 69th annual convention assembled, encourage League members to be proactive in purchasing and using alternative hygiene products, to lower our impact on the environment; and be it further

**Resolved,** That this resolution be forwarded to the national council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada for consideration at its 96th annual convention.

**ACTION PLAN: Reducing the Impact of Disposable Hygiene Products**

1. Encourage members:
	* to become knowledgeable about the landfill, environmental and health impacts of disposable hygiene products through personal reading and guest speakers
	* to practise the use of alternative solutions where and when possible
	* to put buying power into action by purchasing hygiene products that are more environmentally friendly
	* to enlighten women in general of this movement
2. Write letters to manufacturers urging them to develop safe and healthy biodegradable hygiene products to reduce the impact on landfills and the environment.

**BRIEF: Reducing the Impact of Disposable Hygiene Products**

In 2009, the Ocean Conservancy’s International Coastal Cleanup Project collected 20,000 tampon applicators (Chic para 7). Furthermore, over twelve billion sanitary napkins and seven billion tampons enter the landfills in North America each year (Wayne “Sustainability” para). Disposable hygiene products (DHPs) are routinely deposited in common landfills, yet they carry a public health risk for those exposed to them (Green24 “Health Implications” para). Their improper disposal can also lead to sewage system/plumbing issues (Kilgannon). Production of both disposable products and reusable products consumes a large amount of local drinking water, although the impact on landfills is the greater concern (Baldwin final para). Disposable diapers, for example, comprise 2.3% to 15% of landfill waste (What a Waste para 1&2). These issues with DHPs are all a great weight on our environment.

Companies such as Domtar, Huggies, Kimberly-Clark, Pampers, Playtex, Proctor & Gamble, etc. must be contacted and urged to replace their non-biodegradable hygiene products with reusable or, at least, biodegradable products.

In *Laudato* Si (par 23), Pope Francis has asked that greater attention be paid to the human impact on the environment. As such, we should endeavour to make the use of reusable and washable products more widespread by educating ourselves and others on the alternatives available, by encouraging the use of environmentally friendly options, by boycotting single use DHPs, and by lobbying for increased research funding for the development of alternative products.

With a membership approaching 5000, the Catholic Women’s League in the Archdiocese of Edmonton could make a sizable impact on the companies that manufacture hygiene products. By choosing reusable or biodegradable products whenever possible and by writing letters, we can let companies know of our concerns and how these factors influence our buying decisions.

**WORKS CITED: Reducing the Impact of Disposable Hygiene Products**

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