
MUNICIPAL SECTOR PLAYS KEY ROLE IN BLUE BOX TRANSITION, July 7, 2017

The Province passed new legislation in November 2016 that will have a major impact on the way municipal solid waste is managed.

The *Waste Diversion Act* was repealed and replaced by the *Waste-Free Ontario Act*. The *Waste-Free Ontario Act* includes both the *Waste Diversion Transition Act* and the *Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act*.

Currently, the cost to run programs for collecting and recycling paper products and packaging is split roughly 50/50 between municipalities and the companies that produce these items. The new legislation will transfer full responsibility for these programs to producers.

This is an opportunity for your municipality to finally get fully compensated for the commercial products that show up in your waste stream.

Full producer responsibility is not a new concept. It has been embraced by several European countries and the Province of British Columbia. Leading companies understand they are in the best position to manage the entire 'life cycle' of their products – from when they are made to when they are reused or recycled.

Here in Ontario, the provincial government has decided to apply this concept initially with paper products and packaging, tires, hazardous wastes and electronics. Other materials such as mattresses, carpets and furniture will be considered in the future.

The new legislation has started the movement toward full producer responsibility, but there is still a lot of work to do. Regulations must be drafted and all the details of the new system must be resolved.

Blue Box recycling programs will undergo some of the biggest changes, as municipalities will have new options – to act as service providers to producers who are required to pay for these programs, to work with private companies that may use municipal infrastructure, or to opt out altogether.

It is in the best interest of municipal governments to get this work done as quickly as possible, particularly given some inevitable delays around the upcoming provincial election. Each year the Blue Box transition is delayed will cost municipal governments across Ontario an estimated \$130M.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Municipal Waste Association, Regional Public Works Commissioners of Ontario, and the City of Toronto have joined forces to form the Municipal Resource Recovery and Research Collaborative (Municipal 3Rs Collaborative) to advocate for a smooth and timely transition to full producer responsibility, and to make sure key municipal priorities like maintaining service standards to residents are protected.

The Municipal 3Rs Collaborative is working closely with key producers and the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change in a process to consult on revisions to the current Blue Box Program Plan. This would be the first step in transitioning the Blue Box to full producer responsibility.

Today, the Municipal 3Rs Collaborative sent a joint letter to the Minister asking that he request the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority, the new regulatory authority established under the *Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act*, to initiate a consultation to amend the Plan. The letter specifies that the amended Plan must:

- Not negatively impact Ontarians' experience with and access to existing recycling services;
- Improve environmental outcomes;
- Create a consistent recycling experience for all Ontario residents;
- Ensure a fair and open marketplace; and
- Address the provincial interests listed in the *Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act* thus becoming the blueprint for the future development of a producer responsibility paper products and packaging regulation.

The key issues to be addressed in the consultation of an amended Plan include:

- Mechanism for the transition to full producer responsibility;
- Payments and terms;
- Targets;
- Ongoing transition due to municipal contract timing variability; and
- Standards of service provision.

The role of the Municipal 3Rs Collaborative is to listen carefully to the Ontario municipal sector, feed this information into the process, promote municipal interests, and provide updates and resources that will help municipalities manage contracts and make the best possible decisions for their own local programs and communities.

The Municipal 3Rs Collaborative is working to support all Ontario municipal governments in this process, and be assured that there will be an extensive consultation process to ensure full participation by the sector.

This is why it is very important for your municipal council and staff to get in touch, ask questions and become fully informed. Start by signing up for AMO's Waste Portal by sending an email to: amo@amo.on.ca, and please contact any of the organizations listed below to learn more about this important transition.

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Every **1,000 tonnes** of waste diverted, on average, creates **7 jobs** in the recycling industry.



Recycling can create **10X** more jobs than disposal.

By reusing **Blue Box** recyclables the annual reduction in Greenhouse Gas emissions is equal to removing **330,000 vehicles off the road**



Moving to a more circular economy would support **13,000 new jobs** in Ontario and provide a **\$1.5 billion** boost to the province's gross domestic product

The economic benefit is

over 4X greater



than the net costs of recycling



Municipalities collect, process, market and dispose of nearly **4.4 million tonnes of material** each year, at an annual cost of **\$1 billion** to taxpayers.

In Ontario,

four waste diversion programs are delivered jointly by municipalities and producers.



Blue Box



Hazardous Waste



Electronics



Tires



Since 2003,

municipal taxpayers have paid **more than 50%** of the Blue Box program at a cost of **\$242 million**.

The current proposal to transition the Blue Box is expected to take at least another six years and will cost municipalities an estimated **\$780 million**.



Municipalities can save **\$130 million** per year by accelerating this transition.

