

# Product & Packaging Stewardship Review

*MANAGING WASTE RESPONSIBLY*

**A faxed information service for municipal governments — Vol 1, Issue 3 June 2000**

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## Quebec moves ahead on stewardship front

Not long after Quebec passed Bill 90 (authorizing the Province to enact take-back legislation for packaging and products), draft regulations are being written, released, and “producer responsibility organizations” (PROs) are being set up.

### PAINT

The first published regulation (June 1) is for paint take-back, which requires industry to recover 25% by 2002, 50% by 2005, and 75% by 2008. Similar to BC’s paint program in structure, an industry organization called: “Eco-Peinture” will manage paint can recovery on behalf of Quebec paint manufacturers.

Customers will be levied an “eco-fee” per gallon of paint sold (in BC the fee is 50 ¢ per gallon). All revenues will be managed by Eco-Peinture to pay for collection and end-market development. The collection infrastructure will be a

combination of retail take-back and drop-off centres. The full program should be under way by 2001.

### USED OIL

Later this month, the “pre-publish” used oil, container and filter regulation will be released for comment. The regulation is based on the prairie province model, which requires manufacturers to take responsibility for used oil, container, and filter recovery. On May 4, an interim board was elected for a Quebec used oil management association, which will set up, oversee and finance the collection infrastructure on behalf of manufacturers.

Manufacturers will be levied “eco-fees” (in prairie provinces the fees are: 5¢ per litre of oil, 5 ¢ per litre container of oil, 50 ¢ for small filters, and \$1 for large filters). These fees can be recouped by retailers from customers either as a separate charge or included in

the price of the product.

The full program should be under way by 2001.

### PACKAGING

Scheduled for pre-publication release this fall, the packaging regulation will require recovery goals of: 60% for glass, plastics, metals and fibres; 75% for used oil, paint and pesticides; 50% for textiles, and 80% for one-way beer and soft-drink containers (currently under deposit return) by 2008.

Brand owners will be required to take-back directly or set up a third party organization to cover municipal run curbside collection costs, minus the avoided cost of landfilling. The third party PRO will be “Collect Selective Quebec” (CSQ). At this point municipal funding criteria and industry’s packaging fees are undetermined.

## More pop bottles discarded, fewer cans recycled in the U.S.

According to an analysis released by the Container Recycling Institute (CRI), the U.S. aluminum can recycling rate has hit a low of 55.2%, almost 5% below the 1997 level. Also reported is that the number of discarded plastic pop bottles in the U.S. has increased from 7.6 billion in 1994 to 15.1 billion in 1998.

Quoted in *State Laws Recycling Update*, CRI’s Pat Franklin, said this means “41 million soda bottles every day that end up in landfills or tossed on the side of the road”.

Franklin attributes much of the problem to 20-ounce pop bottles, which are difficult to capture in a curbside recycling programs because they are primarily sold from vending machines and convenience stores, away from the home.

## What is this?

This is the third issue of *Product & Packaging Stewardship Review*. *PPSReview* will be sent to you on a regular basis to keep you updated on issues in the product and packaging stewardship arena across Canada and beyond. *PPSReview* is now posted on the Internet, at [www.productstewardship.org/ppsr.html](http://www.productstewardship.org/ppsr.html) and the current edition, as well as the first and second editions, are available via email in .pdf format.

# Briefly...

## RECYCLED CONTENT IN GLASS — BIG DROP

Consumer Glass, Canada's only glass bottle maker, reports a decline in recycled content from 32% in 1998 to 29% in 1999.

*Resource Recycling, May 2000*

## ALBERTA LIQUOR INCLUDES RECYCLING COST

By the end of June, the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) a crown corporation, will increase the wholesale price of all spirits, wine and cooler products by as much as 7 ¢ per unit, depending on the container size and type. Up until now, recycling costs (\$3.3 million) were covered directly by the AGLC. In May, the Alberta Government said recycling costs for liquor containers should not be subsidized with public funds, but "should be the responsibility of manufacturers, retailers, and consumers".

*Canadian Press & AGLC*

## U.S. RECYCLING RATE IS 28%

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, America's recycling rate is at 28%. The report also compares the current municipal solid waste generation per capita rate of 4.5 pounds per person per day to the 1960 rate of 2.7 pounds/person/day. Per capita waste is increasing at a slow rate, in spite of the fast-growing economy. Packaging makes up the largest segment of the waste stream at 33%, with non-durable goods next at 27%. Material-specific recovery rates are:

Paper & Board	41.6%
Glass	25.5%
Aluminum	27.9%
Steel	35.1%
Plastics	5.4%

*State Laws Recycling Update, May 2000*

## MORE CARDBOARD TO RECYCLE

According to a new study from the Freedonia Group, global shipments of corrugated boxes are expected to rise by 4.2% annually, through to 2003. The increase is attributed to a reduction in trade barriers, increasing globalization of the world economy, and internet-based shopping.

*Recycling Laws International, April 2000*

## LOS ANGELES REQUIRES BEVERAGE PRODUCERS TO USE RECYCLED CONTENT

In early April, Los Angeles City Council unanimously adopted an ordinance requiring recycled-content beverage packaging to be used in vending machines placed on city property. For a copy of the municipal motion, visit:

<[www.grrn.org](http://www.grrn.org)>.

*Grass Roots Recycling Network*

## AIMING FOR ZERO WASTE IN NEW ZEALAND

Over one third of local authorities have joined a national pilot project to make a commitment to reduce waste to zero by 2015. The main strategy "is to create incentives to sort and separate resources at the mouth of the landfill," said Bill Sheehan, head of U.S.- based Grass Roots Recycling Network speaking at the Zero Waste Conference in New Zealand, last year. Sheehan adds that there is "a role in exerting an influence further upstream at the design end – to reduce the wasteful use of resources prior to consumption".

*Zero Waste New Zealand Trust*

## GERMANY RECYCLING COSTS WILL DECREASE

The German Green Dot Program is famous not only as a model of full producer responsibility, but also for its high costs. According to Wolfgang Ringel of the Dualles System, costs are high because the system was set up so quickly that haulers and processors took advantage and increased their fees by as much as 30%. These contracts will be expiring by 2003, when Ringel estimates, that industry's fees will be decreased substantially. Plastics for example will be cut in half, from about (US) 80 ¢ to 40¢ per pound sold.

*Recycling Laws International, April 2000*

## NEW YORK TO EXPAND DEPOSIT-RETURN?

With the recent closure of New York's largest landfill on Staten Island, pressure is on government to divert a lot of waste and very soon. New York's Attorney General, Eliot Spitzer announced that he wants to expand the state's deposit return law to include non-soft-drink beverage containers.

*State Laws Recycling Update, May 2000*

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## 33% not enough, say UK critics

UK's environment minister recently announced legally binding recycling targets for local authorities in an attempt to reduce waste and end the "dustbin culture". The target is 33% by 2015. The current recycling rate is 9%. The Minister is counting on multi-material household source separation programs, consisting of several coloured bins or bags, to achieve the national goal.

According to reports from *Reuters News Service* and the (London) *Independent* newspaper, critics are disappointed that the mandatory targets are being imposed on local councils, causing costs to fall largely on the general taxpayer. They argue that it would be better to have a more direct link between the amount of waste produced and the price paid.

Also, the target makes no distinction between waste products which decompose harmlessly and those which present a hazard to the environment.

Parliament is also looking at other mechanisms to encourage diversion. For example, the Recycled Content of Newsprint Bill, which would mandate 80% recycled content for newsprint and 65% for magazines has passed second reading. While the bill is expected to be quashed by industry lobbyists, it has energized industry to propose a voluntary target of 60%.

## UNLIKELY HERE, SAY BREWERS

# Plastic beer bottles in Canada?

In the last issue of *PPSReview* (April/May 2000) it was reported that the Miller Brewing company is switching from glass bottles to PET plastic bottles. Since then Anheuser-Busch has announced it will begin marketing Bud and Bud Lite in plastic bottles this month (June).

Tetra Pak has announced that Swedish brewer Spendrups will begin packaging its beer in plastic bottles coated with Tetra's new "glaskin", an interior coating of glass-like silicon oxide that seals the plastic thereby preventing carbon dioxide from escaping and oxygen from entering the beer.

Is Canada next? If so, what does this mean for our recycling programs?

In 1999, Canadians consumed about 4.9 billion packaged servings of beer. Of these servings, 78% or 3.9 billion were sold in refillable bottles. If brewers were to step away from refillable glass bottles and deliver bottled beer to market in one-way plastic beer bottles, these 3.9 billion servings would result in 154,000 tonnes of amber PET entering the Canadian waste stream. In Ontario alone, it would mean the generation of about 70,000 tonnes of amber PET waste.

When asked if it had plans to make the switch, the beer industry response was an emphatic No. *PPSReview* was told that the Canadian industry has invested heavily in refillable bottle systems and that it does not foresee a switch to either one-way

## COMING EVENTS

### August 13-16, 2000

Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) annual conference, Ottawa Congress Centre. Call (416) 971-9856

### September 25-28, 2000

Canadian Waste Management Conference & International Trade Show, Halifax. Call (902) 463-3538.

### October 1-4, 2000

Joint Counties and Regions of AMO Conference. Alliston, Ontario. Call (416) 971-9856

### October 18-20, 2000

'Preventing the Waste Blues' - Recycling Council of Alberta Conference and AGM, Chateau Lake Louise. Call (403) 843-6563

### October 24-26, 2000

Recycling Council of Ontario's Annual Conference & Trade Show, Ottawa Congress Centre. Call (416) 960-1025

### November 15-17, 2000

Coast Waste Management Association fall conference, Ocean Point Resort and Spa, Victoria, BC. Call (250) 752-8293

bottles or cans in the near future.

The brewers pointed out that while plastic bottles may have been introduced into the U.S., the use of glass bottles continues to grow as U.S. brewers continue to try to differentiate their products through the use of premium packaging.

"Provincial governments across Canada recognize the environmental and waste management cost benefits of refillable containers and deposit-return systems that facilitate their recovery," said Gary Rygus, Senior Director of Corporate Affairs at the Brewers of Ontario.

"Reuse also provides the cost savings and competitive footing for Canadian brewers operating in relatively small regional markets.

It really is a win-win situation. Our consumers may ask us to look at plastic at some point, and if we do, the economics will mean that we'll look at it in the context of a reusable plastic bottle not a disposable one," Rygus added.

# Opinion Piece

*The opinions expressed in the Opinion column are not necessarily those of PPSReview*

## Whatever happened to the big 50?

By Jay Arthur

In case no one has noticed, the year is 2000. By now we were supposed to have reduced waste by 50 %.

Are we even close? No.

Indeed, my spies tell me that at a recent "consultation" on the new Waste Diversion Organization's long-term funding principles, the magic 50 was described as "an aspirational goal" and then as "a directional target". Well, I'm glad we got that clarified.

The trouble is that waste management is off the radar screen for the Province of Ontario, and unless we get another few more Plastimet and Hagersville fires it will probably stay there.

The entire environment portfolio has been gradually demoted since 1995.

We began with a greenhorn. She was quickly pushed aside for a seasoned but uninspiring war horse.

He eventually gave way for someone who may actually have had some promise. But then he was moved to a more important portfolio when its minister was hung out to dry after falling foul of conflict guidelines. The new kid on the block, having attributed Ontario pollution to acts of nature (as opposed to deregulation and a lack of enforcement of the regulations that have survived) has been busy putting our fires in Walkerton and will likely be

doing so for some time.

What chance do we have for meaningful discussion on waste management when the environment ministry itself cannot find a real voice at the cabinet table? Probably about the same chance we have of

appreciate that other than recognized hazardous wastes, it's the organic stream that causes much of the grief in landfills, not the inert glass and plastic we seem so keen to divert — at any cost, it seems.

placing their obscure plastics into the blue box rather than the garbage bag. Unless there is some real product stewardship shown by industry, and soon, merely shifting these materials from the garbage stream to the blue box stream will actually cost the taxpayer more, not less, and the environmental benefit of "recycling" single-serve lunch containers into plastic wood is highly questionable.

Let's stop wasting our time on this packaging. Send it to the landfill and make no bones about it. The environmental impact would be negligible and those companies who make these convenience items will not be able to hide behind the mobius loop in their marketing.

In the meantime, let's beef up the composting, beef up the grasscycling, stop picking up lawn clippings and ban organics from the landfill.

We may reach the big 50, one day. But, if the Province were serious about reducing waste, it would be a heck of a lot sooner.

**"One of these years we will appreciate the amount of waste that is organic, and that to tackle that fraction would push us past the halfway mark very quickly."**

reaching the (federal government-sponsored) greenhouse gas reduction targets we promised at Kyoto.

It is a curious thing that everyone was concerned about the environment when the economy was in the tank and those reductions in waste and emissions seemed do-able. Now they are only illusions. Or are they?

If some individual communities can reduce their waste by 50 per cent, why can't the province as a whole?

One of these years we will appreciate the amount of waste that is organic, and that to tackle that fraction would push us past the halfway mark very quickly.

At the same time we may

One of the first acts of the current government was to cut the subsidy on backyard composters. As the single most effective (and cheapest) household waste reduction tool on the planet, you have to wonder about that move.

Slowly, but surely, the user pay concept is working its way into our waste management culture, as more and more (and larger) municipalities bring in some sort of use-based structure for their programs. It's coming, and it is having a dramatic effect on the composting and recycling rates in those communities.

The composting is good, but we won't be much further ahead, financially, if all people are doing is

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