

PPSReview

MANAGING WASTE RESPONSIBLY

**Product & Packaging
Stewardship Review**

An information service for municipal governments

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Tire burning off the table in Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia Environment and Labour Minister Mark Parent has taken the incineration of tires off the table as a management option.

"Tire-derived fuel will not be used in Nova Scotia for the foreseeable future," said Mr. Parent in an announcement November 19.

Mr. Parent was speaking after the release of a report from an advisory committee set up to review used tire options in the wake of a controversial plan to burn the province's used tires at Lafarge Canada's Brookfield, Nova Scotia, cement kiln. Although Lafarge had not yet made a formal application to ministry to get the necessary approvals to do so, Mr. Parent ended the plan with his comments.

The committee's report rated tire processing options against economic, environmental and health criteria,

including whether or not a management option was currently available in Nova Scotia, and the energy required for each.

"The report says that tire-derived fuel is not the best option for Nova Scotia's environment, and presents a number of alternatives to consider," said Mr. Parent.

ALTERNATIVES

Possible alternatives to incineration given in the report include using tires for engineering fill, in septic systems and as landscaping mulch.

The findings of the report will be used in developing a new used-tire management strategy for the province.

"The committee's hard work will contribute to the design of an effective and environmentally responsible tire management program for the future and allow us to continue to set the pace for

solid waste management in Canada," said Mr. Parent.

CONTROVERSIAL PLAN

The controversy started in January of this year, when the Resource Recovery Fund Board (RRFB), the provincial agency that administers the used tire management plan, approved a five-year, \$12 million contract with Lafarge to supply used tires to its Brookfield cement plant for use as a fuel. Under the plan, Lafarge would have burned 500,000 tires per year.

As reported in *PPSReview* (February, 2007), RRFB CEO Bill Ring thought the plan was sound, saying incineration was "an environmentally sustainable and responsible way to transform used tires from a waste into a resource."

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Ontario's MHSW plan still awaiting approval

A month and half since the provincial election, and six months after it was delivered to the minister, there is still no signature on the Ontario municipal household special waste (MHSW) stewardship plan.

The plan was, however, referenced in a November 20 press release on the government's commitment to reducing environmental toxics, which mentioned, "working with industry on an improved diversion plan for household hazardous waste, including batteries, paint and household chemicals."

The plan is referred to as an environmental action "the McGuinty Government has taken."

Former environment minister Laurel Broten was replaced by municipal affairs minister John Gerretsen, in a recent cabinet shuffle.

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Briefly...

COKE TO BUILD \$60 MILLION PLASTIC RECYCLING PLANT IN US

Coca-Cola and its partner, United Resource Recovery Corp., announced September 6 that they will spend US\$60 million on what they claim to be the largest plastic bottle-to-bottle recycling plant in the world. The new plant, to be built in South Carolina, will be in full operation in 2009 and is expected to product 100 millions pounds of recycled PET annually. Coca-Cola says it has set a goal of recycling 100% of the packaging materials it generates. The company has established Coca-Cola Recycling, which is dedicated to recovering and recycling North American packaging from Coke products. Coke has also redesigned its 20-ounce bottle in the US to use 5% less PET and has started a line of clothing made from recycled PET.

*Coca-Cola, press release, September 5, 2007
www.thecoca-colacompany.com*

BRITISH CHAIN TO CHARGE FOR PLASTIC BAGS

Marks and Spencer, a UK-based department store, will be introducing a 5p (CDN\$0.10) charge on plastic grocery bags in 33 stores in England. Starting in mid-January, the store will offer customers a free M&S Bag for Life with each food purchase. Then in February, the stores will begin charging 5p per plastic bag (which will now be made of 100% recycled post-consumer waste) and 10p for the more durable Bag for Life. The company says all profits from the bag sales will be donated to environmental projects in the region. If successful, the charge will be implemented in over 380 stores in England. The move follows a 16-week trial in Northern Ireland stores, which has seen a 66% reduction in the number of bags used and three-quarters of customers now using an alternative bag every time they shop.

*Marks & Spencer, press release, November 6, 2007
www.marksandspencer.com*

12% OF JAPANESE SHOPPERS DECLINE BAGS

A survey by Japan's Ministry of the Environment found that 12% of customers always decline free plastic bags. The survey, conducted in March 2007, looked at the plastic bag use habits of customers. Of those surveyed, 85% admitted to using free plastic bags every time they shopped, but overall, 60%

said they had their own bags, indicating that the reuse message is getting through. Forty-six per cent of those surveyed agreed with charging for plastic bags, compared with 29% opposed. Another survey looked at how retailers are trying to reduce plastic bag use. Forty per cent of retailers surveyed indicated they have targets for reducing the number of plastic bags they hand out. The most popular way to encourage reduction was offering gift stamps for people bringing their own bags. Just over 9% charge for bags.

*Japan for Sustainability, November 19, 2007
www.japanfs.org*

REPORT LOOKS AT VOLUNTARY CLOTHING TAKE-BACK SYSTEMS

Japanese infrastructure for retail clothing take-back for recycling and reuse is the topic of a recently-released report. Oakdene Hollins Ltd., UK, prepared the four-page summary, which looks at the voluntary take-back systems of three Japanese companies (two retailers, one supplier). The systems vary, with collected clothing managed in a variety of ways, from charitable donation to thermal recycling. The report is available at www.oakdenehollins.co.uk/recycle-textiles.html.

*Resource Recovery Forum, November 2007
www.resourcesnotwaste.org*

DUTCH BUDGET TARGETS PACKAGING WITH CARBON TAX

The Dutch Tax Plan for 2008, announced in September, will introduce a tax on packaging starting January 1, 2008. The tax is part of a series of new taxes to "green" the tax system. Seven packaging materials will be covered: glass, aluminum, other metals, plastics, paper and cardboard, wood, and other types of materials. A tax rate for each material will be set based on its "greenness." The government will attempt to base the tax on existing industry levies to keep administrative costs to a minimum. The tax will be payable at the point where the packaged products are first made available in the Netherlands. Companies with less than 15,000 kilograms of packaging each year will be exempt. The government anticipates a tax revenue of 240 million Euros (CDN\$350 million) in 2008 and 365 million Euros in 2009.

*Ministry of Finance, Netherlands, website, November 2007
www.minfinnl/en/home*

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The current and past issues of PPSReview are available for viewing on the Internet (www.productstewardship.org).

Anyone wishing to support the Fair Comment Project may email Ben Bennett (bbc@albedo.net). Confidentiality is guaranteed.

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NOTICE: THIS PUBLICATION, AND THE VIEWS EXPRESSED, HAVE NO CONNECTION WITH THE ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPAL RECYCLING COORDINATORS OF GUELPH, ONTARIO.

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RECEIVES MINISTER'S APPROVAL

RRFB reviewing RFPs for e-waste

The Nova Scotia Resource Recovery Fund Board (RRFB) is reviewing the responses to its requests for proposals for collection sites, consolidators and/or recyclers, and auditing services for the province's new e-waste plan.

No burning of NS tires

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Residents thought differently, and complained that the burning of the tires would release heavy metals and dioxins into the air, negatively effecting human health and the natural environment.

A report from Dalhousie University's Engineering Faculty on using tires as alternative fuels muddled the debate further, finding both positive and negative arguments for burning tires.

In response, the Province set up the three-member advisory committee under the Environment Act in April. The committee was asked to consider all options for used tire management and report back to the minister.

BANNED

Nova Scotia banned the landfilling of motor vehicle tires with a rim size of 24.5 inches or less in 1997. Residents can return up to four tires at one time to tire retailers across the province.

Currently a one-time environmental fee of \$3 to \$9 is charged on each tire sold in the province. These funds, which totalled over \$3.3 million in 2006, are used by RRFB to support the costs of collecting and processing the tires.

Nova Scotia produces 900,000 scrap tires each year. Currently these tires are shipped to Lafarge's Saint Constance cement plant in Quebec. Given the findings of the advisory committee, this arrangement will continue into the foreseeable future, as the province will not stockpile the tires in anticipation of a new Nova Scotia-based solution.

Approved by the Minister of Environment and Labour Mark Parent in early October, the *End-of-Life Electronic Stewardship Plan for Nova Scotia* will see old and unwanted electronics diverted from landfill starting February 1, 2008.

A newly-formed, not-for profit organization, Atlantic Canada Electronic Stewardship (ACES), will oversee, implement and maintain the program. ACES represents electronic product manufacturers and retailers. RRFB, which prepared the plan, was selected to serve as program administrator.

Under the plan, consumers and businesses will drop off their unwanted desk-top and laptop computers, computer

accessories (printers, monitors, keyboards and mice) and televisions at locations across the province at no cost.

Other items will be added February 1, 2009: computer scanners; VCRs, DVD players, and other audio and video playback and recording systems; telephone and fax machines; and cell phones and other wireless devices.

An environmental handling fee, to be charged at the point of purchase, will fund the program.

More information is available at the RRFB's website, www.rrfb.com.

Put milk containers on deposit in Alberta—committee

The all-party Standing Committee on Resources and Environment has found that milk containers should be included in Alberta's deposit refund system, and the current levy removed.

The committee also calls for an increase on the deposit on containers up to 1-litre from 5 to 10 cents.

These are among 12 committee recommendations after a six-month reviews of key issues pertaining to the Beverage Container Recycling Regulation. The committee's report

was tabled in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta on November 15.

Milk containers are currently exempted from Alberta's *Beverage Container Recycling Regulation* (section 3) and are collected through a voluntary program operated by the Alberta Dairy Council (ADC) and municipalities. The program "has not met recycling goals set by the Government, according to the Ministry," notes the report, and "there is confusion among members of the public as to whether milk containers are included in the deposit refund system."

The report can be found on the Resources & Environment website: <http://www.assembly.ab.ca/resourcesandenvironment/>

Still no Ontario e-waste plan

As of press time (November 27), Waste Diversion Ontario had yet to post the draft preliminary Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Program Plan.

The third in a series of workshops to develop the plan has also been postponed. There is no word on the reason for the delay in the one-line announcement posted November 9 on the WDO website (www.wdo.ca).

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WDO announces performance-based payments to municipalities for 2008...

Waste Diversion Ontario has released the details of the proposed payments in 2008 to municipalities to offset blue box program costs.

The approved net system cost for setting 2008 stewards' fees is \$133,047,808. Funding to municipalities under the Blue Box Program Plan (BBPP) in 2008 is \$66,523,904. This amount includes the in-kind contribution from Canadian Newspaper Association (CNA) and the Ontario Community Newspapers Association (OCNA) of \$1,829,057, the Continuous Improvement Fund (replacing the Efficiency and Effectiveness Fund) calculated as 20% of remaining cash funding or \$12,938,989; and cash payments to municipal programs of \$51,755,858.

Last year, payments were calculated using a different methodology than in previous years. Instead of using the Municipal Funding Allocation Model (MFAM),

2007 funding was based on a percentage of each program's reported net system cost.

ADJUSTMENTS

For 2008, there are adjustments for removal of wine and spirit containers from Ontario blue box programs, "using material-specific costs derived from activity-based costing and material specific revenues derived from reported revenues adjusted for revenue sharing as per the Blue Box stewards' fee setting methodology."

(We likely haven't heard the last of this particular move; stay tuned—editor.)

There will also be a deduction of \$700,000 from programs with E&E Factors above the cost band for their group to provide an incentive for improvement, and it will be distributed to the remaining programs, pro-rated to their funding, to provide a reward for better performance.

For the first time, some programs have been identified in the WDO

funding as "poor performers" and their funding adjusted accordingly.

The programs gaining the most under the new funding calculation are the City of Toronto, which sees an increase of \$181,049.33, the Region of Peel (\$117,225.35) and the Region of Durham (\$53,284.93).

Hardest hit by the changes are the Region of York, which sees a reduction of \$143,075.70, the City of Ottawa (-\$120,074.38) and Hamilton (-\$74,606.10).

The cash payments to municipal programs for their 2008 Blue Box funding will be in the form of four equal installments on June 30, September 30 and December 31, 2008 and March 31, 2009.

The complete list of funding of payments and E&E factors, as well as the explanation of the 2008 payments are available at the WDO website (www.wdo.ca/content/?path=page80+item35760).

..and steward's fee changes see higher costs for lower-performing materials

Approved stewards fees for the Ontario blue box in 2008 will see the fees for plastic continue to increase. Stewards are responsible for providing municipal funding of \$66.5 million in 2008.

The boards of Stewardship Ontario and Waste Diversion Ontario approved the 2008 fees in early October. In a presentation on the preliminary 2008 fee schedule to industry stewards on September 10, Guy Perry of Stewardship Ontario noted that the new fees reflect a move to ensure low-performing materials pay more of the stewards' burden, with plastics taking "the biggest hit."

FUNDING MODEL WEIGHTINGS CHANGE

The funding model for the Blue Box Program Plan looks at three factors. In 2008 the weighting of these factors

will change, with net costs remaining at 40%, recovery rate decreasing to 35% from 40%, and the equalization factor increasing from 20% to 25%.

According to Stewardship Ontario, the changes were made to further tie fees with the performance of specific blue box materials.

ADDITIONAL \$2.4 M

The WDO board approved an additional \$2.4 million above the 2008 rates for stewards of plastics. These funds will "support development and implementation of a strategy to increase Blue Box plastics recycling."

The additional fees come on the recommendation of a consultant's study on the opportunities and costs of increasing plastics recovery. The process to develop a better blue box plastics recovery strategy will cost about \$2 million per year for three years.

Although all plastics will benefit from the strategy, higher additional fees will be charged to more difficult to recycle plastics and those with low recovery rates. These include polystyrene, film, laminates and other plastics.

Stewardship Ontario staff will present recommendations on the implementation strategy at the SO board meeting on November 29.

For more information visit Stewardship Ontario's website, www.stewardshipontario.ca.

Second e-waste stewardship program approved in BC

The Western Canada Computer Industry Association (WCCIA) became the second industry association with an approved plan under British Columbia's electronic waste product stewardship requirements. Hu Wallis, the Director of the Environmental Quality Branch, gave WCCIA's stewardship plan conditional approval on October 10. The program started November 1.

As reported in the September edition of *PPSReview*, an electronic stewardship program operated by the Electronics Stewardship Association of British Columbia (ESABC) was launched August 1. Encorp Pacific, which operates beverage container return depots across the province, manages and administers the ESABC program.

The two programs will operate independently of each other. As the WCCIA stewardship plan states, "the collection, transportation and recycling system for electronic collected by the WCCIA was designed to ensure that there is no overlap with the program managed by Encorp."

For more details, visit www.gov.bc.ca/env.

E-waste, HHW regs reviewed in Manitoba

The Manitoba Ministry of Conservation is now considering comments on its proposed household hazardous waste (HHW) and e-waste stewardship regulations. The comment period closed November 13.

Falling under the 1990 Waste Reduction and Prevention Act, the proposed regulations will make companies that produce or distribute HHW or e-wastes responsible for creating a plan for their disposal and management. The proposed regulations put the cost of disposal and management on the stewards, calling for them to develop economically and environmentally sound programs.

Green Manitoba, an agency of the government, is coordinating the development of these programs. For more details, see www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/pollutionprevention/

Burger joins EPSC

Dalton Burger has been appointed the new President and Chief Executive Officer of Electronics Product Stewardship Canada. (EPSC).

Mr. Burger began his new position November 15. It had been vacant since David Betts left EPSC in June of this year.

EPSC is an industry lead not-for-profit organization working to "design, promote and implement sustainable solutions for the recycling of end-of-life electronics."

For more information, visit EPSC's website, www.epsc.ca.

COMING EVENTS

November 28-29

Canadian Waste & Recycling Expo
Vancouver, BC
(877) 534-7285
www.cwre.ca

November 28-30

Alberta Urban Municipalities Association Convention
Calgary, AB
(780) 433-4431
www.munilink.net

December 4-6

(Composting Council of Canada
Compost Facility Operating Practices Course
Brampton, ON
(877) 571-4769
www.compost.org.

February 3-6, 2008

Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association
Annual Convention
Regina, SK.
(306) 525.4387
www.suma.org

Feb 24-27, 2008

Ontario Good Roads/Rural Ontario Municipal Conference
Toronto, ON
(905) 795-2555
www.ogra.org

Feb 27-29, 2008

Fifth National Workshop on Extended Producer
Responsibility
Co-hosted by New Brunswick's Department of
Environment and Environment Canada
Fredericton NB
(By invitation)

March 12-14, 2008

Local Government Administration Association of Alberta
Conference and Trade show
(780) 398-3994
www.lgaa.ab.ca/events.htm,

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Opinion Piece

The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of PPSReview

In praise of corn-based plastic bottles—not!

By Jay Arthur

In laboratories and workshops, all over the world, men and women in white coats are toiling away on one of the most critical issues of the day: how to avoid facing the real issue.

In the past couple of years or so, there have been some major breakthroughs, fully justifying all the time the men and women in white coats have put in, and offering some solace to those who could have used all that scientific genius and all those resources to address other challenges, like illness.

The results of these breakthroughs are now being proudly displayed at trade shows in the United States and Canada.

Instead of fast food and other containers lingering for several weeks on street corners other public places, we are told they will now only linger for a few weeks, or maybe even less time. Yes, folks, welcome to the world of bio-degradability, photo-degradability and various other-degradabilities (including oxo-degradability).

You see, the problem is not that some people out there are slobs, or that entire industries have developed to feed the consumer needs of a busy but affluent society, or that municipal taxpayers are stuck with the bill to clear up after the slobs.

No, the problem is the packaging. Fix that and the problem is solved.

As a result, we are now seeing a whole new approach to packaging. Let it rot. The disposable age has come full circle. And, the irony is that we were just starting to get somewhere, belatedly but definitely.

After years of throwing "community clean-up" crumbs at litter issues, the McHortons' of this world

were actually beginning to pay attention—encouraged by a province that was actually beginning to enforce 3Rs regulations that became law before half of the clientele in the fast food palaces were born.

While I am sure there are some very worthwhile uses for the various degradability capabilities now available, they do not include plastic bottles.

The theory, based on the slob scenario, is that if people are going to throw away their plastic water bottles, we should make them break down quickly to reduce the litter impacts.

(We'll get into why they are buying water at a higher price than gasoline

"While I am sure there are some very worthwhile uses for the various degradability capabilities now available, they do not include plastic bottles."

another time—it's part of the busy but affluent society syndrome. It is curious, though, that there is all this fuss about the packaging of water when folks have been buying water flavoured with sugar for years, using the same amount of water, and endangering their health in addition to their environment.)

So the men and women in white coats came up with a corn-based bottle, which, *in the right conditions*, breaks down like any other organic material.

We won't get into the fertilizers and other goodies required to produce the corn right now. Instead, let's look at what happens when the bottle is empty.

The slob, despite all the community clean-up crumbs thrown at litter programs, throws the bottle out of the car window or leaves it on the ground. Assuming the empty bottle's location is appropriate for degradation (and that's a big "if" - how many composters are made from concrete or pavement?), the

composting process will begin and it will disappear from whence it came.

The conscious consumer hangs onto the bottle and puts it in a blue box or other recycling receptacle at the first opportunity. Because plastic bottles are recyclable, right? Every message the conscious consumer has ever seen confirms it. (This is where the marketing men and women in dark suits who hired the men and men in white coats jump up and down and say, "But if you look under the bottle it says: "compostable" —or it should do, anyway.")

The corn-based bottle finds its way into a recycling plant where one of the sorters grabs it from the line and puts it in with all the real plastic bottles. It ends up part of a bale and is shipped off to a plastic processor. Part of the plastic processing involves drying the bottles with heat, and this is where the corn-based bottle, for the first time in its short life, really stands out. It is the one that (duh!) looks like burned corn syrup and has melted all over the equipment. Corn bottles have a lower melting point than the usual plastic (PET). The processor folks have been telling us about this quite regularly in recent years. One of these days, they will stop accepting loads of normal plastic from recycling programs because the post-syrup clean-up is just not worth the trouble. And who could blame them?

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