

PPSReview

MANAGING WASTE RESPONSIBLY

**Product & Packaging
Stewardship Review**

**An information service for municipal governments
Vol 8, Issue 2, March 2008**

E-WASTE PROCESSORS OPPOSED

WEEE plan now looking for Ontario minister's signature

Ontario Environment Minister John Gerretsen should come back from his Easter Holiday this week to find a thick envelope on his desk.

Ontario Electronic Stewardship's (OES's) 286-page final Waste Electronics & Electrical Equipment (WEEE) Program Plan, half of which is appendices and schedules, was approved by the Waste Diversion Ontario (WDO) board last week and now awaits the minister's signature.

Phase One of the WEEE stewardship program will see computers, monitors and TVs, and computer printing and peripheral devices collected for processing. Costs are to be paid by brand owners, first importers and assemblers of non-branded WEEE.

The OES report estimates 28% of the WEEE stream will be covered by Phase One.

The plan as proposed would see the number of WEEE collection sites across the province increased. The collection sites would be operated by many organizations, including municipalities, non-profit groups, retailers, waste management companies and others.

Ontario's e-waste processors are still very much opposed to the plan (see *PPSReview* January 2008).

LARGELY IGNORED

In a letter to OES president Sean DeVries, March 14, the processors say their efforts to work with OES have been "largely ignored" and their suggestions dismissed.

The letter is signed by the Canadian Association of Recycling Industries and the heads of ADL Process Inc., Computation Ltd, Computer Recyclers Inc, dataXile Corporation, I-Recycle Computers, KIMCO Steel Sales Maser Corporation, ReBOOT Canada, thriftopia.com and Trillium e-Scrap Recyclers.

The OES plan "is flawed from both an environmental and economic perspective," they write.

The plan will have the effect of levying more than \$50 million in fees on consumers and "gutting a growing entrepreneurial sector of the green economy."

*For more on the WEEE plan, see
OES to pay...
on page 6/8*

JUICY TIDBIT DEP'T

Are tires next?

In a recent interview with the *Kingston Whig-Standard*, Ontario Environment Minister (and former Kingston Mayor) John Gerretsen was asked about a tire stewardship plan for Ontario, the only province without one.

His answer: "It's going to happen this year. I have no idea why the last program wasn't implemented. I've been specifically asked by the premier not only to take another look at it but to come up with a tire-recycling program. It won't be longer than a year. I know it's unacceptable that we don't have a tire program."

To read the full interview visit the *Whig-Standard* website (www.thewhig.com/PrintArticle.aspx?e=933443#).

INSIDE THIS EIGHT-PAGE ISSUE

News in brief	2/8
AMO calls for 100%	3/8
MHSW plan gets nod	4/8
Beware, degradables	5/8
Editorial	8/8

Briefly...

STORE TAKES BACK FOOD WASTE IN JAPAN

Japanese supermarket chain Yamato Co., which runs 10 stores in Yamanashi Prefecture, just west of Tokyo, is closing the loop on kitchen food waste. The stores are marking one year of accepting household food waste from shoppers. The waste is composted at the stores, and the finished compost is given to contract farmers that grow produce which is then sold at the supermarkets. The program began in March 2007, with Yamato installing a composter at its Fujimi store in Narasaki. The composter can accept 150 kg of waste per day—about the amount generated by 300 households. An “eco point” system was introduced to reward member shoppers with about 5 yen when they bring in food waste. Yamato now accepts food wastes at all its stores, with approximately 75 kg of waste received daily.

Japan for Sustainability, March 8, 2008
www.japanfs.org

RECYCLED CONTENT FOR HP CARTRIDGES

Hewlett-Packard announced this past January that the company has developed a way to use post-consumer plastics in the production of original HP inkjet printer cartridges—an industry first. The new recycling process allows HP to combine multiple sources and grades of plastics into its printer cartridges. The plastic inputs come from dismantled inkjet cartridges returned through HP’s international Planet Partner recycling program and recycled plastic bottle resin, such as that from water bottles. The finished recycled-plastic inkjet cartridges contain between 70% and 100% recycled content. In 2008, HP is committed to using 10 million pounds of recycled plastic through this process.

Hewlett-Packard, January 30, 2008
www.hp.com

FOOD PACKAGING WASTE A GLOBAL CONCERN

Food packaging waste is one of the fast-growing areas of environmental concern. Results from Nielsen’s November 2007 Global Food Packaging Survey show that 40% of

respondents were very concerned about food packaging waste, up from 31% in the previous poll conducted in May 2007. A press release from Nielsen notes that, “concern for packaging waste increased more than any other environmental concern.” The internet-based survey of 25,000 people, conducted in 48 nations, showed 50% of those surveyed would be willing to give up convenience packaging, such as boxes to stack products at home or resalable containers. About 30% were willing to forego packaging meant to keep products clean, freshness or provide cooking instructions. Ten percent of respondents were not willing to accept any change in food packaging meant to benefit the environment. The survey also identified regional differences in how willing respondents were to packaging changes. New Zealanders were the most willing to reduce convenience food packaging at 65%. European and North Americans were the least willing to give up packaging for hygienic reasons.

Nielsen Company, February 14, 2008
www.nielsen.com/media/2008/pr.080214/a.html

UK SURVEY FINDS MEN LESS LIKELY TO RECYCLE OLD CLOTHES

A survey by the British Heart Foundation (BHF), which operates thrift shops across the UK, found that men are three times more likely than women to throw away unwanted clothing and shoes. The survey found that 48% of men don’t consider textile recycling to be very important, an idea supported by one-third of UK women. The BHF is highlighting the findings to encourage people to donate their unwanted items for reuse. BHF resale shops raised over £12.5 million (about \$25.6 million) for heart disease research in 2007.

Morpeth Harold, March 18, 2008
www.morpethherald.co.uk

WEIGHT LIFTED OFF UK EASTER BUNNIES

Cadbury introduced foil-wrapped “eco-eggs” in the UK this year as part of its commitment to reduce absolute net carbon emissions by 50% by 2020. By reducing the standard egg packaging, Cadbury says it will save 1,130 tonnes of packaging this Easter.

Cadbury-Schweppes, February 18, 2008
www.cadburyschweppes.com

Product & Packaging Stewardship Review is published by Ben Bennett Communications as part of the Fair Comment Project. It is emailed as a communications service aimed at providing a broad range of stewardship and associated information from Canada, the United States and overseas.

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.

© Ben Bennett Communications, 2008

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

**PPS
Review
March
2008**

Page 2/8

AMO SEEKING MUNICIPAL INPUT

AMO/AMRC call for overhaul of Ontario blue box funding

Ontario municipal councils are being asked for comments on a discussion paper calling for industry to pay 100% of the cost of managing post-consumer packaging and printed paper.

In February, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the Association of Municipal Recycling Coordinators (AMRC) issued a draft *Discussion Paper on An Alternative Approach to Ontario's Blue Box Funding Model*.

The paper cites the vulnerability of municipalities to rising waste management costs as the primary reason to revise the current blue box funding model. With ever-increasing amounts of post-consumer packaging and printed papers that are difficult to recycle or of low value, and the likely provincial requirement for source separated organics programs in the near future, municipalities are faced with rapidly increasing waste management costs.

"Municipalities can no longer subsidize an industry generated problem," states the memo circulated with the discussion paper.

THE STATUS QUO

Under the current model, set in place under the Waste Diversion Act of 2002, industry stewards are expected to pay 50% of the net cost of managing designated blue box wastes collected through municipal recycling programs.

In reality, municipalities have never received the full 50% as at least 40% of designated wastes are not captured in the blue box and thus are not subject to industry funding. In addition, the Canada and Ontario newspaper associations have been able to offer "in-kind" advertisements in lieu of payments, a long-standing complaint of the municipalities.

The recently approved Municipal Hazardous Special Waste (MHSW)

plan and the anticipated waste electronic & electrical equipment (WEEE) plan would see industry paying considerably more of the costs of managing these respective wastes. The MHSW plan, which is optional for municipal participation, will see industry paying 70% to 80% of costs, the paper says. The WEEE plan is projecting industry will pay 100% of the costs, assuming the \$165 per tonne payment to collectors actually covers their costs.

In reality, municipalities have never received the full 50% as at least 40% of designated wastes are not captured in the blue box and thus are not subject to industry funding.

AMO/AMRC discussion paper

RECOMMENDED—100% OF COSTS TO INDUSTRY

The discussion paper put issued by AMO/AMRC looks at a number of alternative blue box funding scenarios, including those used in developing the MHSW plan. After looking at the alternatives, the municipalities have "determined that any changes in responsibility and revenue sharing could not be done in a way that would improve the Blue Box system from its current state."

The discussion paper recommends that industry be required to assume 100% of the costs of managing all post-consumer packaging and printed paper in order to "address the fiscal imbalance in the current Blue Box model."

The five recommendation actions given in the paper are as follows.

Recommendation 1: Full extended producer responsibility—Industry becomes responsible for 100% of the blue box costs under an expanded list of designated materials to include all post-consumer packaging and printed

paper and responsible for all costs of managing post consumer packaging and printed papers in the litter and waste streams (phased in approach).

Recommendation 2: Ministry of Environment (MoE) set strict recovery targets to reach 90% recovery by 2011 (the timeframe of the pending Michigan, USA, border closure).

Recommendation 3: MoE enforce non-compliance penalties for "free loading" industries and establish directives for foreign importers that they meet packaging guidelines/directives set out by the Province.

Recommendation 4: Require producer management of problem materials through a specialized recovery plan or deposit-return system.

Recommendation 5: Require appropriate province-wide communication on the transition of the blue box program, and effective ongoing public education to promote blue box recycling.

MUNICIPAL SUPPORT SOUGHT

Municipalities have until April 29, 2008, to offer comments and respond to the call for support of the discussion paper. The full paper is available in the Policy Issues Section of the AMO website (www.amo.on.ca).

**PPS
Review
March
2008**

Page 3/8

Ontario Minister approves MHSW stewardship program

As of July 1, 2008, manufacturers and first importers of certain municipal hazardous or special wastes (MHSW) in Ontario will be obligated to pay for their products safe disposal.

The plan, as approved, is posted on the Stewardship Ontario's website (www.stewardshipontario.ca/mhsw), along with a hitherto unreleased addendum "clarifying how haulers and processors managing MHSW recovered from non-municipal collection locations will be identified and incentivized" (sic).

The Ontario Waste Management Association, which notes the addendum was not posted for public comment and remains "very concerned" about what it sees as a lack of precision in the industrial, commercial & institutional (IC&I) part of the MHSW plan.

In a letter to SO chief executive officer Joyce Barretto, March 3, and copied to all Waste Diversion Ontario

(WDO) board members, OWMA president Rob Cook points out the association has throughout the plan development process raise concerns about the IC&I part of the plan with SO staff and with WDO board members.

The OWMA looks forward to a collaborative process to determine program requirements and protocols .

APPROVED FEBRUARY 28

The MHSW plan, approved by Environment Minister John Gerretsen on February 19, 2008, aims to double the amount of MSHW diverted from landfills over the next five years.

To encourage participation to meet this target, in Year One of the program a promotion and education plan will be developed to increase awareness about MHSW and its safe disposal. In al, 255 collection day events will be added to the 169 days currently run by municipalities. Municipalities with depots will be

encouraged to extend hours of operation and industry will be encouraged to operate take-back programs through private operators.

Stewardship Ontario will implement the program, which in general will see industry paying for post-collection costs. In Year One, the cost to stewards is estimated at \$28 million. Municipalities will continue to pay the costs associated with collection.

Phase One of the program targets paints and stains, paint thinners, strippers and other solvents, oil filters, lubricating oil containers, non-rechargeable batteries, engine coolant, propane and other pressurized tanks, fertilizers, and pesticides.

Other MHSW will be added in Phase Two, including fluorescent lights, rechargeable batteries, pharmaceuticals and certain mercury-containing devices.

GTA glass plant to go ahead, despite "uncertainty" from LCBO program

A new glass recycling plant that was supposed to have been killed by Ontario's deposit-return program for wine and liquor is going ahead as planned.

To be built by Montreal-based Unical Inc., it will provide a local market for Greater Toronto Area (GTA) blue box programs, and has the capacity to accept materials from other programs.

Stewardship Ontario (SO) held a media event on March 3 to formally announce that it is providing \$1.75 million in seed money for Unical to purchase processing equipment for the new facility, which will be built in Brampton. It will handle glass from the cities of Toronto and Hamilton, and the regions of Peel, York and Durham.

"One of Stewardship Ontario's mandates is to develop and enhance markets for recyclable materials

leading to improvements in system cost efficiencies," said SO Vice-Chair Sandra Banks, in a news release.

Among them, the five GTA programs will provide 44,000 tonnes of clear and coloured glass to the plant, which will have a capacity to receive up to 100,000 tonnes per year.

The upbeat nature of the Stewardship Ontario announcement was in stark contrast with statements made on September 9, 2006 by CSR.

A hastily-issued news bulletin was released on a Saturday, the day before Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty actually announced that the rumoured LCBO deposit return system was to be a reality. In it, the CSR president said Unical had been advised not to proceed with its investment in the plant "because of the potential negative impact" of the Province's (as-yet unannounced) plan.

The proposed joint municipal/

industry joint venture "will be lost, given the uncertainty created by the (as-yet unmade) announcement and because municipalities will not now be able to commit to providing the amount of glass that is needed," said the 2006 news release.

Apparently not.

Stewardship Ontario's March 3, 2008 news release notes Unical has a seven-year supply contract with the five GTA municipalities.

**PPS
Review
March
2008**

Page 4/8

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Degradables: help spread the word

By Cathy Cirko

It was with great interest that I read Jay Arthur's Opinion Piece in the November issue of the *PPS Review*. Clearly, here was a man who recognizes that having a product labeled degradable is just not enough.

I would be the first to say that degradable products are attracting increased brand owner and retailer interest, as they strive to "do the right thing".

But, there needs to be some clear lines drawn in the sand. Degradable products need to provide an environmental benefit and comply with Canada's standards for making an environmental claim. Not doing so will only further confuse the public, damage the marketplace, and potentially hurt the North American recycling industry.

Currently, there are standards in place for some degradables, such as plastic bags used in municipal composting facilities.

And I'm happy to see that these are products certified by an accredited third party. Congratulations to them for getting it right. It's called

responsible use and marketing.

At the same time, there are products labeled "degradable" hitting the market that don't offer clear information on where they are meant to degrade, how long they will take to degrade and what standards they comply with.

A recent study (funded by Recyc-Quebec, the Canadian Plastics Industry Association, the Oxobiodegradable Products Institute and the City of Montreal) looked at several biodegradable plastic bags in terms of their effect on the recycling stream of plastic bags and film. Entitled *Evaluation of the Impact of Biodegradable Bags on the Recycling of Traditional Plastic Bags*, the study underlines the potential that exists of damaging the current plastic bag recycling system.

This is an important issue that deserves special attention and one that could be avoided through appropriate use and proper certification procedures.

To ensure responsible use, the Canadian Plastics Industry Association is spearheading the development of a *Product Stewardship Guide and Commitment for Degradable Plastics* for the Canadian marketplace.

This guide is a voluntary program designed to encourage the responsible use and marketing of degradable plastics in Canada. Already, two information sessions have been held for manufacturers and retailers regarding this industry initiative. The guide is expected to be available in late 2008.

Right now, there is a lot of misunderstanding in the marketplace about degradable products. Kudos to Jay Arthur who not only recognizes this, but who brought attention to it through his column. Now it's our turn to step up to the plate and help spread the word. Only by working together can we ensure that this new evolution of plastics can deliver on all counts.

Cathy Cirko is the Vice President, Environment and Health, Canadian Plastics Industry Association. She is also Director General of the Environment and Plastics Industry Council (www.plastics.ca/epic), a standing committee of the Canadian Plastics Industry Association. Ms Cirko may be reached at (905) 678-7405, ext. 234, or by email (ccirko@cpia.ca).

Toronto looking into a deposit-return system for batteries?

Toronto City Councillor and long-time environmental advocate Glen De Baeremaeker says a staff report is expected in June that will recommend deposit fees on batteries and other household hazardous wastes, the *Toronto Star* reports.

The staff report will outline the details of a deposit-return system for batteries, compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs and paint cans sold in the city.

The report follows an initial report put forth in the spring of 2007, which proposed deposits on these products as a way to meeting Toronto's target of 70% diversion from landfill by 2010. City council requested that staff

prepare a further report on the issue.

"With the new City of Toronto Act, the City can do it — and I think we're going to do it," Mr. De Baeremaeker told the *Toronto Star* on March 11.

"Heaven help the people who stand in our way, because the public wants to do this."

The city could enforce the system by requiring stores selling these products to participate with the deposit-return system as a condition of their retail licence.

A similar approach was attempted by the city in the 1990s, in an effort to force the LCBO to bring in a deposit-return program. That move was quickly ended when the provincial government

of the day passed legislation quashing the plan.

How a Toronto deposit-return system for batteries, CFLs and paint cans would fit with the new Municipal Hazardous or Special Waste plan is unknown.

**PPS
Review
March
2008
Page 5/8**

CCME considers comments on its packaging initiatives inventory

As reported in the January 2008 *PPSR* Review, the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Task Group is working to provide guidance on how product stewardship initiatives that can be developed and implemented across Canada. Packaging issues are task group's first priority.

As part of this work, the Task Force reviewed definitions of and best practices around packaging stewardship. The resulting document, *Inventory of Sustainable Packaging Initiatives and Proposed Approach to Develop Sustainable Packaging Guidelines*, and is now considering comments from the public.

NATIONAL STRATEGY

The final version of the inventory will be part of the information that CCME uses to develop a national strategy and framework for sustainable packaging.

It has been almost 20 years since CCME began work on the National Packaging Protocol, and more than 10 years since CCME released its Guiding Principles for Packaging Stewardship in May 1996. The

voluntary National Packaging Protocol was quite successful, reaching its target of reducing packaging waste going to landfill by half four years ahead of schedule.

SIGNIFICANT CONCERN

Despite this early success, packaging waste remains a significant concern in Canada. A recent global survey on food packaging found that "concern for packaging waste increased more than any other environmental concern" (see Page 2).

In March 2007, a meeting of 60 international packaging experts urged CCME to take the lead in developing a strategy on sustainable packaging.

In September, the EPR Task Group contracted Five Winds International to review definitions and guidelines for sustainable packing that could be incorporated into CCME's national sustainable packaging strategy.

Whether or not CCME develops a strong national strategy for packaging stewardship, many businesses are starting to tackle the issue in response to public demand. Companies such as Wal-Mart, Johnson & Johnson and

BASF have developed their own packaging scorecards, design guidelines and life cycle analytical tools.

They were among the 13 initiatives reviewed in the sustainable packaging inventory. The authors of the report strongly recommended that CCME look to existing sustainable packaging guidelines rather than develop their own.

NEXT STEPS

The EPR Task Group is considering comments on the sustainable packaging inventory. The inventory and its recommendations will be incorporated into the development of a policy framework for the national sustainable packaging strategy over the next four months.

For more information on the process, visit the CCME's website (www.ccme.ca). Note the draft inventory report is currently not available on the site, but can be downloaded from the PPSR website (www.productstewardship.org).

"Replace WDO" fallout

Solid Waste and Recycling columnist Usman Valiante suggestion that the WDO be replaced (December/January) has resulted in a spirited exchange between him and the Retail Council of Canada, a WDO board member, in the February/March issue of the magazine (www.solidwastemag.com).

OES to pay collectors \$165/tonne

Continued from Page 1/8

OES proposes paying the organizations \$165 per tonne or \$54 per full pallet of material that is collected, sorted and prepared for transportation. OES notes this was felt to be too low "but no suggestions were offered."

In response to concerns from municipalities, OES says it will allow them to use gaylords for desktop and portable computers instead of shrink-wrapped pallets as previously required. Collected materials will then be transported to processors for recycling.

Retailers offering a formal return system will also qualify for the \$165 per tonne collection incentive, once approved by OES.

A promotion and education plan will be developed to raise public awareness of the program.

The methodology for setting the stewards fees is outlined in the draft plan. The cost of collecting, consolidating, transporting and processing Phase One WEEE in year one is estimated at \$48.8 million.

A copy of the report is available on the OES website (www.ontarioelectronicstewardship.ca/pdf/program_plan_mar11_08.pdf).

**PPS
Review
March
2008**

Page 6/8

Recycling plant accepts Ontario polystyrene

The former Canadian Polystyrene Recycling Association (CPRA) plant, which closed its doors in December of last year, has been purchased by a Port Hope businessman and is now operating under the name: Canadian Polystyrene Recycling Alliance.

Sam Alavy, the owner of several businesses that produce picture frames and construction mouldings from recycled polystyrene, bought the plant in early March. Post-consumer polystyrene is now being accepted at the Polyframe facility in Port Hope.

The Mississauga plant was the only market for recycled post-consumer polystyrene in Ontario, although other plants have accepted post-industrial polystyrene.

CPRA, which opened the plant in 1991, announced it was closing late last year due to economic conditions associated with the high Canadian dollar.

New tire recycling program begins in Manitoba

As of April 1, Manitoba's scrap tire recycling program will change hands. Tire Stewardship Manitoba (TSM), a non-profit agency with membership from the four industry organizations that sell tires in the province, will take responsibility from the government for managing scrap tires.

The program will be funded by eco-fees charged on all new tires. Retailers must participate in the eco-fee program in order to sell tires in the province.

New under TSM's program is the inclusion of off-road tires. A spring round-up of off-road tires will launch the permanent introduction of this portion of the program.

For more information, visit www.tirestewardshipmb.ca.

Stewardship Ontario AGM set for April 3rd

Stewards and stakeholders have been invited to Stewardship Ontario's 2008 Annual General Meeting. The meeting will take place at the Novotel Hotel in downtown Toronto from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., on April 3. Those unable to attend in person can join the meeting online via a webcast.

The meeting will include reports by Stewardship Ontario's CEO Joyce Barretto and Chair Dennis Darby of Procter & Gamble Inc. As well, those attending the meeting will consider the general by-law, receive the 2007 audited financial statements and elect Stewardship Ontario directors for 2008.

Those wishing to attend either in person or via the webcast are asked to register online by the end of day, Monday, March 31 (www.stewardshipontario.ca/register2.htm).

COMING EVENTS

April 3

Stewardship Ontario Annual General Meeting
Toronto, ON
(416) 594-3456
www.stewardshipontario.ca

April 16-19

Northwest Ontario Municipalities Association (NOMA)
Regional Conference
Thunder Bay, ON
(807) 626-0155
www.noma.on.ca

Apr 30-May 2

Ontario Small Urban Municipalities Conference
Collingwood, ON
(519)393-5877
www.amo.on.ca

May 14-15

Association of Municipal Recycling Coordinators
(AMRC) Spring Workshop
Hockley Valley, ON
(519) 823-1990
www.amrc.ca

May 14-16

Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities Conference
Sault Ste. Marie, ON
(705) 752-2783
www.fonom.org

June 10-12

MWIN Annual General Meeting
Niagara Falls, ON
(519) 620-9654
www.mwin.org

June 25- 27

RCBC 34th Annual Zero Waste Conference
Vancouver, BC.
(604) 683-6009
www.rcbc.bc.ca

**PPS
Review
March
2008**

Page 7/8

Opinion Piece

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

Why do taxpayers continue to subsidize the free market?

By Jay Arthur

You could understand if some of the guys in blue suits are getting a bit hot under the board room collar nowadays.

The latest missive from the AMO think tank is calling for industry to pay all the costs of managing packaging waste and printed papers, whether it ends up on the street, in the garbage or in the blue box.

It's only been a few years since the municipalities finally agreed to accept the "shared responsibility" mantra and settled for half of the cost of just the blue box. Industry thought that discussion was over.

Not that it ended up being close to half the cost.

By the time industry's lobbyists had browbeaten the municipalities into accepting an "agreed cost" based on someone's estimate of what it *should* cost to collect and process recyclables (subsequently further "refined" by linking payments to "best practices"), and by the time the newspapers had weaseled out of paying anything at all in exchange for a bunch of ineffective print ads (euphemistically known as an in-kind contribution), and by the time 10% and then 20% of what they should have received got sliced off to pay for research such as establishing what "best practices" are, the old 50/50 split concept was looking a bit ragged.

Anyway, I digress.

So now that industry is paying, let's say, a pretty hefty share of blue box costs, it must be a little galling to see AMO's *Alternative Approach to Ontario's Blue Box Funding Model* discussion paper bring the whole "who pays" question back to where it began.

Seasoned waste policy wonks will recall that it was the municipal position

calling for full producer responsibility or nothing that killed what became lovingly known as the "CIPSI" stewardship model proposed by industry in the early 1990s.

It essentially offered 50 cents on the dollar, and was turned down. It wasn't until the early 2000s that the issue was finally resolved enough for legislation to be drawn up.

Battered and bruised by years of mistreatment, downloading and underfunding by Mike Harris, the municipalities took what they could get. Champagne corks were popped in the Coke, Pepsi and associated company boardrooms and everyone went back to the golf course.

With the replacement of the regressive conservatives with a Queen's Park regime that at least pays lip service to listening to local government concerns, there seems to have been a stiffening of the municipal spine.

Well, it turned out that the municipal dragon was not entirely slain. With the replacement of Mr. Harris's Regressive Conservatives with a Queen's Park regime that at least pays lip service to listening to local government concerns, there seems to have been a stiffening of the municipal spine. And not before time.

The municipalities do have a good case. Why should local taxpayers—and that includes industries—pay for the management of someone's discards? The whole point of having local services paid for by all of us is that there are some things we all have a stake in and it is in all of our interests to see that they are paid for, through taxes.

While there may be some argument about how many of these services should be a collective responsibility, there is little debate—not in this country, anyway—that certain core services should be covered.

Those who feel there should be less government tend to advocate fewer services and reassure us that the market will take care of the rest.

Ironically, garbage collection only became one these services because there were public health risks if such services were not universally available. Of course in those days it was mostly ashes, bones and dead horses. The vast majority of consumer goods and printed papers on our streets, in the garbage and in blue boxes today did not exist. And we are seeing the user-pay concept gaining ground to offset the cost of those who abuse the service.

When the blue box came along it was supposed to be financed by the revenues. But it never happened. Municipalities have been effectively subsidizing industries like the soft drink makers ever since. Ever quick off the mark, once Ontario was sold on the idea of recycling, they promptly dropped their local pop bottling operations and dumped their post-consumer costs onto taxpayers.

To this day it remains a breathtaking coup.

And whether the cost of managing this stuff is paid for by the producer or the customer, it is not a municipality's job to subsidize free enterprise.

The market wouldn't like it and neither do taxpayers.

**PPS
Review
March
2008**

Page 8/8