

Product & Packaging Stewardship Review

MANAGING WASTE RESPONSIBLY

**A faxed information service for municipal
governments — Vol 1, Issue 5, September 2000**

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13% of all plastics, 36% of PET, HDPE captured in Ontario blue box program

The recovery of secondary plastics through the Ontario blue box program in 1999 continues to lag behind recovery rates using other systems.

This summer, along with other partners, staff at the Waste Diversion Organization (WDO) have been collating data garnered through a survey of municipalities undertaken this past spring. Verbal reports to the various WDO committees indicate plastics recovery is virtually unchanged from 1998, when 22,400 tonnes were recovered. (Aluminum recovery, by contrast was reported to be down more than 10%.)

More information on the survey will be available next month at the Recycling Council of Ontario annual conference in Ottawa, when the spring survey results will be officially released.

According to the recent WDO report, the total amount of plastics available for recycling in 1999 was 180,000 tonnes. These figures are based on a series of household waste composition studies. If the 22,000-tonnes figure is accurate, that translates to a recovery rate of about 13% for the total plastics stream.

By zeroing in on the main plastics in the blue box, PET and HDPE, the story is more positive. The WDO estimates out of a possible 49,200 available tonnes, 17,500 tonnes or 36% were recovered — a great improvement, but still nothing to write home about.

By applying the plastics generation data (based on sales) from the recent Recycling Council of British Columbia study, the total PET and HDPE tonnage generated in Ontario would be much higher, at 63,839 tonnes. Applying this figure to the reported total of 17,500 Ontario tonnes recycled suggests a 27% recovery rate.

(Unlike the Ontario numbers, the BC generation figure allows for PET captured through ICI programs (factory canteens etc.), so will be a little higher.)

The same study showed a 66.6% recovery rate for PET in the province's deposit-return program.

What is this?

This is the fifth 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

Aluminum can share sliding — CSDA

According to sales data from the Canadian Soft Drink Association (CSDA), the aluminum can market share in Ontario dropped to 50.8% in 1999 from 54.9%, in 1998. This represents a 1.2% decrease versus the five-year average can market share. Also, the bottle market share (mostly PET) in Ontario increased from 30.3% in 1998 to 33.8% in 1999, a 12.7% increase versus the five-year average.

As a percentage of all pop bottles sold in Canada, Ontario's share increased, while all other regions experienced a decrease.

But, as a percentage of all cans sold in Canada, Ontario's share decreased, while all other regions experienced an increase.

For more details - visit CSDA's website: www.softdrink.ca/st1999en.htm

GUEST COLUMN

Zero waste — it's time to get serious

by Andy Telfer

In 1993, as a member of the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC), I brought up the idea and eventually made a motion that we work towards zero waste.

Despite opposition, the motion passed. The clincher was that we work towards zero waste. This left skeptics with the option of working towards zero waste, even if they couldn't imagine a city without it.

This was well before we had statistics that prove that recycling-related activities provide jobs, more economic activity and reduced costs to municipalities.

Why did industry believe in this? Perhaps some of them saw the many business opportunities a zero waste policy opens up: construction and demolition (C&D) waste recovery; collection of more recyclable commodities; composting of green wastes, commercial and residential organics; and so on. Truck, equipment, and container sales (and consultants' fees) will grow accordingly.

Why should municipalities work towards zero waste? How about supporting the economic benefits of waste reduction? Jobs in recycling-related activities outnumber jobs in landfill (for the same tonnage of material) by nine to one, according to the US-based Institute for Local Self-Reliance.

Have you ever visited a landfill, or the garbage dumps of not so long ago?

In many cases, municipalities provide residents and businesses with relatively inexpensive disposal, and are left with all the liability.

I live in the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN - population 135,000) where the Solid Waste Management Plan waste reduction goal is 70%. You'd think that this level of waste reduction would be difficult in a

"Because of our modern disposal system, many products are marketed as disposable..."

mostly rural area, tied to the mainland by an expensive ferry system.

It's all in the attitude.

The RDN is working with both composting and C&D reclamation companies to divert materials to proposed facilities. The RDN looks at all the tools it has available: disposal bans, promotion of the chosen companies, contracts to divert materials received at municipal disposal sites to the proponent's facility, etc. The bottom line speaks volumes: these agreements save municipal money.

KICKING AND SCREAMING

Why should manufacturers work towards zero waste? The growing EPR

(Extended Producer Responsibility) movement is only likely to grow, so it would be advisable to help develop these programs rather than having to be dragged into them kicking and screaming. And why not?

Manufacturers pay for R & D, resource extraction, manufacture, marketing, and distribution. They should also deal with their unrecyclable products: especially those goods made with short life spans.

Because of our modern disposal system, many products are marketed as disposable: from fast food containers to disposable diapers, branded as the most unrecycled items by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Ever try to get a hair dryer repaired? How about that old computer in your closet? Manufacturers build these composite-material items without worrying about their disposal because we handle the disposal for them. This has to stop.

Zero Waste: Creating Resources for a New Economy will be held on October 3 in Vancouver.

We will hear how municipalities and corporations are recognizing the value of the zero waste goal. The event will be opened by the BC Environment Minister, and guest speakers include Warren Snow of Zero Waste New Zealand, Larry Chalfan of Oregon's Zero Waste Alliance, and Dr. William (Bill) Rees on the ecological footprint concept. (See the Calendar on Page 5/6)

Andy Telfer is Chair of Zero Waste BC, and Executive Director of the Coast Waste Management Association. For more information on BC's Zero Waste Summit in October, visit <www.cwma.bc.ca>

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NOTICE

Please be advised that this publication, AND the views expressed, have NO connection with the Association of Municipal Recycling Coordinators of Guelph, Ontario.

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Briefly...

REVERSE-VENDING MACHINES APPEAR IN TORONTO

Last month, four new reverse-vending machines (RVMs) were unveiled by the City of Toronto to help increase the city's recycling rate. It has been estimated that city residents recycle only half of what could be recycled. The new machines allow people to deposit their recyclable plastic bottles and aluminum cans for a 75-cent coupon from *Pizza Pizza*. Set up as a three-month pilot, the project is funded by Tomra, a vending machine manufacturer. RVMs are used in Canadian provinces where deposit return-to-retail systems exist (like Quebec and BC).

Source: Toronto Star

IRELAND PUTS LEVY ON PLASTIC BAGS

The Irish government has approved a 12-cent (US\$) tax on all plastic carrier bags, to be paid by plastic bag manufacturers and wholesalers. The estimated \$12 million annual revenues from the tax will fund environmental programs.

*Source: Recycling Laws International – August 2000
(www.raymond.com)*

E-COMMERCE EXCHANGES THRIVING

There are more than a dozen large, e-commerce resource exchanges facilitating trades of what were once considered wastes. Exchanges deal in a variety of product/resource marketplaces. The first is "asset management" – excess inventory and idle assets. From apparel to metalworking machinery, this e-business has an estimated worth of \$350 billion world-wide. The second type, known as "product auctions", deals in second-hand products from old baby strollers and furniture to vintage motorbikes. The third type of resource exchange, known as "industry specific" specializes in recyclable materials and reusable commodities in bulk (like corrugated boxes).

Source: Tomorrow – September/October 2000

IT HELPS STEWARDSHIP, TOO

Stewardship programs are playing an extensive role in strengthening the e-commerce business and creating new opportunities. For example, mandatory take-back legislation in Europe for electronics and new requirements for end-of-life vehicle disposal will have a marked impact. Already, the automotive industry in Europe is looking at dismantling and material recycling. Pat Daly of Eurecycle.com, a Glasgow-based e-business dealing in a broad range of recyclable commodities, says the volume will increase and e-commerce is the "ideal way to handle them." Other such e-businesses include AssetSmart.com, Ecarboard.com, EnviroXchange.com, Fibremarket.com, ForestExpress.com, Recycle.net, ScrapSite.net, Tradeout.com, and Wastechange.com.

Source: Tomorrow – September/October 2000

Fair Dinkum: Australians set stringent waste rules

In accordance with the 60% waste reduction target Australia established in 1995, the Sydney Olympics waste management plan is aggressive. It requires all involved, including caterers, suppliers, licensees, sponsors, venue management, logistics, athletes and visitors, to play a role.

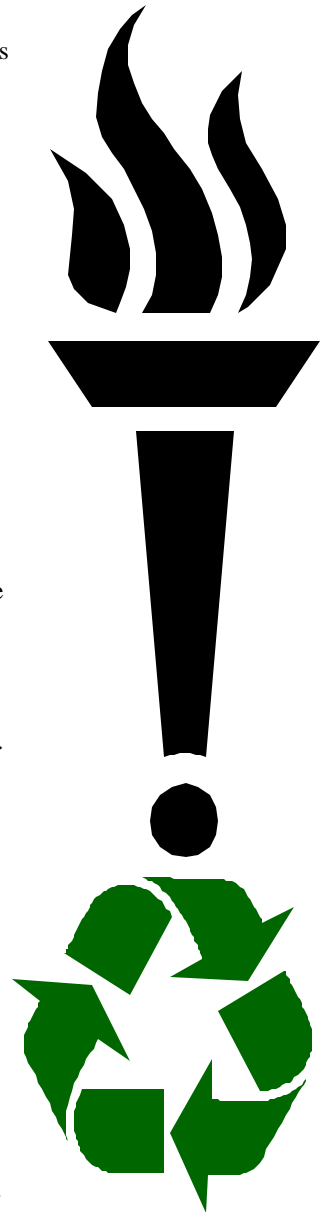
The Sydney 2000 Olympic Games Integrated Waste Management Solution Strategy is built around the guiding principles of the 3Rs hierarchy, landfill avoidance, and education/training.

The strategy includes packaging and foodware specifications in all contracts with Olympic suppliers. For example, promoting of reusable packaging materials and catering utensils is a key component, as well as deeming certain packaging materials as unacceptable. The unacceptable packaging includes polystyrene, aluminum foil, plastic foodware, shrink wrap, and composite-material containers.

Procurement strategies give preference to the use of products made from recycled materials. All non-reusable and non-recyclable materials such as food waste and soiled fibres will be composted. Multiple-colour, coded bins and liners for containers, compostables, glass, cooking oil, paper and cardboard, reusables, medical waste and other waste will be placed in all waste generating areas.

Organizers say the plan is expected to set a new standard in waste management for future Games and large-scale events in general.

For more information visit the Olympic website: www.olympic.com



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50% diversion is too expensive for Ontario, says WDO report

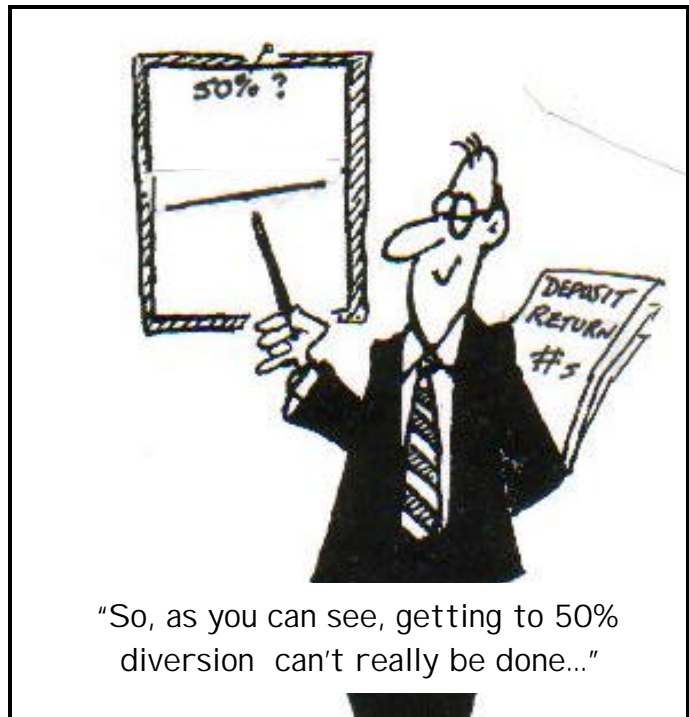
In its September report to the Ontario Environment Minister, the Waste Diversion Organization (WDO) says the 50% waste diversion target is too expensive. It recommends a "middle ground" approach, for a 41% diversion rate.

The report estimates that at its "current momentum," residential programs will increase diversion from about 27% in 1999 to about 31% by 2005, and would cost \$42.5 million.

A "middle ground" approach to diversion would bring Ontario to about 41% in five years. It anticipates increased participation through the imposition of garbage user fees and bag limits, expanded organics collection, and financial support for municipalities. The cost is estimated at \$54.6 million.

To reach 50% would require the middle ground conditions plus landfill bans and increased tipping fees. This option comes with a price tag of \$66 million.

For more information, visit the WDO website: www.wdo.on.ca



EPIC releases recycled content report

The Environment and Plastics Industry Council (EPIC) has released a report on recycled content.

In its *SPECIAL NEWS & VIEWS REPORT: Environmental Packaging*, issued July 2000, EPIC notes "significant accomplishments" have been made in reducing the environmental impact of plastic products and packaging.

Thin-walling means less raw material, and a reduction in the associated impacts of harvesting and operating that material. The 2-litre PET soft drink bottle, for example, has been "down-gauged" by 30% since its introduction in the 1970s.

The report notes there are differing views on the issue of recycled content, which "closes the loop" and drives demand for recycled material. Industry prefers the voluntary approach; others want government legislation. EPIC notes the need to include importers and distributors in such legislation, and fears about competition in the marketplace.

"Another factor that needs to be considered is whether or not there is enough consumer material out there to support such legislation and how to encourage municipalities to provide this material clean and free of contaminants."

The amount of usable recovered product is affected very much by how it is collected. With current recovery rates in Ontario in the 36% range for PET and HDPE and the trend towards less sorting at the curb, the current system may be sufficient for a relatively low recycled content (such as the

10% suggested by the SPEC initiative (see *PPSReview #4*). Materials from other recovery streams, such as deposit programs, may need to be available if a more ambitious recycled content is to be considered.

The EPIC report highlights the recycled content in some of its members' products, some of which already use recycle content, and have not, evidently, been constrained by material availability or quality.

Procter and Gamble's laundry detergent bottles, such as Tide, went from zero recycled content to 20% in the mid 90s and is now in the "high 30s." Sunlight, Snuggle and Wisk (Lever Ponds) use approximately 25% post-consumer plastic, says the EPIC report. SC Johnson, makers of Windex, has close to 50% post-consumer plastic in the product's PET bottle, with most of the company's other PET and HDPE containers having an average of 25%.

Canadian Tire says its Motomaster Formula 1 one-litre motor oil container has 25% post-consumer content.

EPIC has added a recycled content database to its website:

www.plastics.ca/epic

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Short shrift for deposit return in recent WDO report

After several years of controversy about who should and how to finance recycling and how to increase recovery, Ontario's Waste Diversion Organization (WDO) sent its latest report to environment minister Dan Newman on September 1.

Following up on its Interim Report at the end of June (see *PPSReview #4, July/August 2000*), the new report concludes there are "basically three main ways" in which tonnages recycled can be increased:

- building on the performance of existing programs;
- moving towards "high performance" programs, and
- rewarding diversion (through user pay programs).

*Interim Five-Year Plan: WDO Programs Committee:
Curbside Recycling Optimization Task Group.*

Throughout the Canadian Industry Packaging Stewardship Initiative discussion in the mid 1990s and at numerous forums and meetings since, the deposit-return concept has been put forward as either a separate system or a complementary system (as in BC) to maximize recovery of household packaging. Originally, the proponents of the system were environmental groups, but the Association of Municipalities of Ontario supported the concept for soft drinks and the City of Toronto proposed liquor bottles be subject to deposits in the winter of 1998. The newly-amalgamated city council backed off when the Province-owned LCBO started making payments to municipalities to offset the cost of managing its containers in the blue box.

The soft drink industry has vigorously opposed the system for Ontario, even though it is in place in most of the rest of Canada. CSR, the industry lobby group which evolved from OMMRI (and is now running the WDO), is similarly opposed.

There is no mention of using any kind of deposit-return system in the WDO's September report. In its interim report this past June, this option is addressed briefly, along with product levies/green taxes and local taxes/user fees.

According to the interim report, proponents of the deposit-return concept argued this approach "ensures effective pass-through of costs to consumers, makes these costs visible to consumers and provides an obvious reminder to participate in waste diversion activities." Opponents, says the report, argue this approach "is difficult and costly to administer, places unfair burdens on industry (especially the retailer), and provides no incentive to change manufacturer behaviour." There is no discussion of the diversion potential from deposit-return. (*The key findings to date: 3.2 Paying for Diversion Programs, June 2000*).

In the WDO September report, there is no reference to deposit-return.

What do YOU think of the WDO?

PPSReview invites readers to submit their views on the WDO. These will be posted on the www.productstewardship.org website. It is up to you whether you wish to include your name, but please indicate your background — municipal, industry etc., and your location. Emails should be sent to bbc@albedo.net - mark the email subject as "WDO comments".

COMING EVENTS

September 25-28, 2000

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

September 27-30, 2000

Tenth Annual National Composting Conference, Edmonton, AB.
Call (416) 535-0240

October 1-4, 2000

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

October 3, 2000

Zero Waste Summit, Vancouver, B.C.
Call (250) 752-8293

October 18-20, 2000

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

October 24-26, 2000

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

October 24-27, 2000

Union of British Columbia Municipalities annual convention, Victoria.
Call (604) 270-8226.

November 5-8, 2000

Annual Prairie Chapter - SWANA Conference held in conjunction with the Western Canada Water and Wastewater Conference and the Canadian Public Works Association - Manitoba Chapter, Winnipeg.
Call 1-(877)-283-2003; website www.wcwwa.ca

November 9-10, 2000

AMRC HHW Workshop & conference: "HHW Stewardship, Partnerships & Program Design", Oakville, Ont.
Call (519) 823-1990.

November 15-17, 2000

Coast Waste Management Association Fall Conference, Victoria, BC.
Call (250) 752-8293.

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Opinion Piece

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

The demise of the 50% solution

by Jay Arthur

A couple of issues ago, the *PPSReview* back page opinion piece asked the question: What happened to the big 50?

In it, the apparent amnesia about previous commitments to cutting our waste by 50% was noted and lamented. With the recent report from Ontario's Waste Diversion Organization (WDO), the amnesia that seems to be afflicting government has not infected everyone. The WDO recognizes the goal. It just says we can't afford to reach it. Lower the sights, is the message.

It's funny how these goals come and go. Who can forget our federal government, surrounded by its peers from the other big wealthy nations, making solemn commitments to cut greenhouse gases? Today, the only thing we have is the recollection of the euphoria, albeit temporary, that came from thinking somebody in power had finally got it, and was prepared to do something about it. Now the only use for Memories of Kyoto may be for the next President's Choice salad dressing. It will likely be too acidic for most tastes.

The other big 50 that we were all expecting to see in the WDO report was the concept of shared fiscal responsibility translated into hard numbers.

We all knew going into this process that industry might be prepared to pay half the cost of recycling and there were indications that might be the case for household

hazardous waste, too.

The only issue was how much of that half would be clawed back as the WDO went through the motions of reviewing the stewardship options.

Now we know.

Before they sign on the dotted line, however, exactly

VI:6.1.3.vi. What they will do is provide ad space to the value of up to \$1.3 million. So, they will take the money that was to be handed over to the municipalities, take out the cost of buying their ads, then hand over what's left — if there is any left.

Still, 50 cents on the

Seeing as how they would be paid with what would amount to municipal dollars, you have to wonder about any assumption that this role should be assigned to an industry group.

If funds are to be set aside from monies raised to offset recycling costs, be they from industry levies or local taxes, then surely they should be taken from both the industry and the municipal share. It is, in theory, in everyone's interest to find ways to make the program more

efficient and thus increase recovery and reduce costs.

And if both sides are paying, the question of who should be undertaking or overseeing that work and who should be dishing out the money should be a joint decision. That decision should follow a request for proposals. That would be more efficient.

Who knows, we may just get some fresh ideas. The current process has taken the recycling concept a little too literally.

NEWSPAPERS:

So, they will take the money that was to be handed over to the municipalities, take out the cost of buying their ads, then hand over what's left — if there is any left.

PACKAGING:

So, they will take the money that was to be handed over to the municipalities, take out 10 cents on the dollar, give it to CSR, then hand over what's left.

what contribution might Ontario municipalities expect to see towards the cost of the blue box program? This assumes, of course, that Ontario's environment minister can persuade his cabinet colleagues to actually bring in the backdrop regulations needed to level the playing field.

The WDO report suggests net costs for recycling will be about \$45 million this year. Half of that would be \$22.5 million. That would be a nice bonus for local governments.

Not so fast, though. This does not however include the newspapers and other printed papers.

But the publishers will contribute if their revenues do not cover costs.

Well, actually, no. You need to check the fine print — particularly *Part*

dollar for packaging would be nice, even if we are not sure at this stage how it will be apportioned to the producers, importers and distributors.

Well, actually, no. You need to check the fine print — particularly *Part VI:6.2.2.iv*.

What is being suggested is that 10% of the 50% should be used to “promote and recognize increased cost effectiveness in municipal recycling programs and pilot projects” — or, to put it another way, to allow CSR and its consultants to carry on with the work they have traditionally done.

So, they will take the money that was to be handed over to the municipalities, take out 10 cents on the dollar, give it to CSR, then hand over what's left. CSR will then decide whether it goes to fund more studies or to “reward” efficiency.