

# PPSReview

**MANAGING WASTE RESPONSIBLY**

**Product & Packaging  
Stewardship Review**

**An information service for municipal governments**

**Vol 9, Issue 3, November 2009**

SOME ACTUALLY GET MORE THAN HALF

## WDO releases 2010 municipal payment information

Funding criteria aimed at incenting efficiency in Ontario's blue box programs are leading to substantial differences in who gets how much support next year.

While the total funding dispersed to municipalities is a lot less than 50/50 split on which the shared model was

based, some programs are seeing a lot more than half.

The negotiated net cost the blue box program for the purpose of setting 2010 payments was set at about \$84.5 million. (It's a complicated formula—see In Depth, page 4/8). Of that, \$1.4 million is taken off to represent the “in-kind” contribution made by the newspapers.

Then, \$16.4 million is assigned to the Continuous Improvement Fund. That leaves \$65,640,317.97 (39% of the net cost) to be shared among municipal programs.

Other factors mean that some very small programs would have seen payments of more than 100% of cost, had it not been for the application a 75% funding cap. (The Township of Johnson would have seen 253%).

The cities of Barrie, Orillia, Owen Sound and North Bay all receive percentage payments in the low 50s. Of the large programs, Toronto will receive \$9.4M (38.5%), Peel Region \$6.4 M (38.1%), York Region \$5.1M (42.5%) Durham Region \$2.3M (47.4%), and Ottawa \$3.2M (37.4%).

More details and the funding methodology are available at <http://www.wdo.ca/news/?id=177329>.

## Ontario's Waste Diversion Act could see sweeping changes

Ontario's Waste Diversion Act (WDA) will see sweeping changes if the proposed recommendations for change are approved.

Environment Minister John Gerretsen released *From Waste to Worth: The Role of Waste Diversion in the Green Economy* on October 28, 2009. The report proposes changes to the WDA that would mean a new, more flexible approach to producer responsibility, mandatory waste diversion plans from generators, material bans at landfills and disposal levies. The report is available at [www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/land/waste/index.php](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/land/waste/index.php)

Ontarians have until January 11, 2010, to comment on the proposed changes. Comments can be posted to the Environmental Registry (#010-8164) at [www.ebr.gov.on.ca](http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca).

In his introductory message, Minister Gerretsen reiterates that the report is guided by a long-term vision of zero waste. He also stresses that waste diversion is a critical component for the new “green economy.”

The proposed changes are subdivided into six categories: **outcomes-based individual producer responsibility**—makes producers fully responsible for meeting waste diversion requirements in the residential and industrial, commercial and institutional (IC&I) sectors **clarify the concept of diversion**—allows for a wider range of processes and technologies to be used to meet diversion targets; burning waste, without recovering material for reuse, is not counted as diversion

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# Briefly...

## AUSSIES TO SEE ELECTRONICS RECYCLING IN NEAR FUTURE

In a November 5 meeting, Australian environment ministers endorsed a new National Waste Policy that includes free recycling for household computers and televisions. Currently Aussies recycle 10% of their electronics; that number is expected to reach 80% by 2021. The recycling scheme is based on existing voluntary programs where suppliers take-back old equipment. The cost of new televisions and computers are expected to rise to cover the cost of the program.

*Government of Australia, November 2009*  
[www.environment.gov.au/minister/garrett/2009](http://www.environment.gov.au/minister/garrett/2009)

## 44% OF US GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FROM PRODUCTS & PACKAGING: REPORT

Two recent US studies have pointed to waste reduction as a critical component of any climate action plan. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released *Opportunities to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Through Land and Materials Management*. The study found that 37% of the total US greenhouse gas emissions “result from the provision and use of goods products with in the US.” This tally includes all consumer packaging and products, even building components and passenger vehicles, from resource extraction to final disposal. The Product Policy Institute (PPI) released a supplemental white paper written by the lead technical author of the EPA report. The White Paper, *Products, Packaging and US Greenhouse Gas Emissions* looked to incorporate emissions of products made overseas but consumed in the US, subtracting exports. The white paper concludes that when incorporating these emissions to the 37% in the EPA study, products and packaging actually account for 44% of the total US greenhouse gas emissions. In a press release on the papers, the author of the white paper and the technical lead on the EPA report pointed to the importance of improving product design as it can influence all stages of a product’s lifecycle, thereby having a great influence on overall greenhouse gas emissions. Bill Sheehan, the executive director of PPI, added, “Climate action has largely focused on transportation, heating and cooling, and food. Now we know that reducing waste offers the largest opportunity to combat global warming.” Both reports are available on PPI’s website.

*Product Policy Institute, September 2009*  
[www.productpolicy.org](http://www.productpolicy.org)

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Current and past issues of PPSReview are available for viewing on the Internet ([www.productstewardship.org](http://www.productstewardship.org)).

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

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

## NEW “HOT” ITEM—SHOULDER BAGS MADE OF USED FIRE HOSES

A new line of carrying bags, made of discarded fire hoses, has been on the market since April 2009 and is selling well. They are produced and distributed by Patina Japan, which makes the bags from fire hoses that would otherwise be discarded, including old hoses used for firefighting or fire training.

*Japan for Sustainability, September 2009*  
[www.japanfs.org/en/pages/029335.html](http://www.japanfs.org/en/pages/029335.html)

## MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF BATTERY COLLECTION PROGRAMS

US-based Call2Recycle and the Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) have released the results of a study on battery recycling metrics. The study, *Battery Performance Metrics: Recommendations for Best Practice*, looked at ways stewardship performance is measured. Currently a variety of methods are used to calculate collection and participation rates, leading to confusion in measuring the success of programs. Call2Recycle and PSI hope the report will lead to a discussion of common battery recycling metrics, and ultimately better methods to evaluate program success. The full report is available on Call2Recycle’s website.

*Call2Recycle, September 2009*  
[www.call2recycle.org](http://www.call2recycle.org)

## KIWIS SPLIT ON PAYING FOR RECYCLING

A survey of 2,400 New Zealanders in response to a new waste minimization law allow for compulsory recycling schemes found a distinct split in how they would like to pay for recycling. The survey found that two-thirds of respondents thought recycling costs should be covered by local or federal taxes, with the remaining thinking the cost should be recovered by additional charges on products purchased. The survey also found that if the new compulsory waste reduction scheme increased the cost of goods by 10 cents per item, 36% would support the scheme and 34% would oppose, with the remainder either unsure or neither supporting or opposing the scheme. The New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development commissioned the study. The council’s chief executive, Peter Neilson, summarized his take on the findings, saying in a press release, “People are saying the packaging waste system isn’t broken—so don’t impose a new tax on us to fix it.”

*New Zealand Business Council  
for Sustainable Development*

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## MHSW PROGRAM FEES ALSO ANNOUNCED

# 2010 Ontario blue box fees approved

Stewardship Ontario has announced the approved stewards fees for blue box materials and municipal hazardous or special wastes (MHSW) for 2010.

In the blue box, aluminium foil and packaging stewards see a 76.5% decline in fees, from 5.921cents/kg this year to 1.39/kg in 2010. The credit for aluminum food and beverage cans, however, has actually been decreased, from 0.2984 cents/kg to 0.22 cents/kg.

Clear glass fees will see a drop of almost 60%, while magazines, directories and other printed materials will see a 41.6% decline in fees.

On the other side, gable top and aseptic containers and paper laminates will see an increase in fees of 45.5%, from 13.508/kg to 19.65/kg in 2010.

Stewardship Ontario also announced a series of adopted recommendations from consultations

with stewards. These include rounding all blue box fees rates to the nearest one hundredth of a cent, dropping a proposed requirement to have stewards report on reusable textile bags, and assessing the implications of disaggregating paper laminates and aseptic and gable top containers.

### MHSW FEES SET FOR 6 MONTHS

MHSW stewards fees have been set for a period from January 1 to June 30, 2010. Fees for paints and coatings range from 5 cents/unit for small cans under 250 ml to \$3.32 for containers over 5 l. Fees are also set for solvents (44c /l), antifreeze (8c to 9c /l) and oil filters (60 /unit to \$1.19).

Fees for the items to be added in the new consolidated MHSW program

will come into effect on July 1, 2010, with the start of the program.

Like the changes to the blue box rules, MHSW fee rates will now be rounded up to the nearest one hundredth of a cent.

In addition, Stewardship Ontario will defer deficit recovery measures for solvents and requirements for detailed batter reporting until the consolidated program come into effect.

For full details on the rule changes and the full list of stewards' fees, visit [www.stewardshipontario.ca](http://www.stewardshipontario.ca).

## Approval for Consolidated MHSW Plan

The Consolidated Municipal Hazardous or Special Waste (MHSW) Program Plan has been approved by Ontario Environment Minister John Gerretsen.

The plan covers additional MHSW categories, batteries (all types), pharmaceuticals and mercury-containing switches. Provisions are made in the plan to accept select waste from small quantity industrial, commercial and institutional generators.

The consolidated program will official start July 1, 2010. Obligated companies must file with Stewardship Ontario no later than March 31, 2010.

For more information, including a copy of Minister Gerretsen's letter and the full consolidated MHSW plan, visit [www.stewardshipontario.ca](http://www.stewardshipontario.ca).

## WDA REVIEW

### IC&I diversion must increase

*Continued from Page 1/8*

#### **long-term schedule for diversion—**

sets five-year material specific collection and diversion targets, including targets for IC&I generated paper and packaging, construction and demolition materials and vehicles

#### **effective oversight—**

clearly articulating the roles of the Ministry of the Environment (policy, enforcement) and Waste Diversion Ontario (administration)

#### **supporting producer responsibility—**

bans designated materials from disposal

#### **transitioning existing programs—**

working with stakeholders to transition existing programs to comply with the proposed framework.

### TOO MUCH TO WASTE

In a speech before the Recycling Council of Ontario a week prior to the release of the report, Minister Gerretsen summed up the state of waste in Ontario, saying it is "a big problem."

Currently almost 80% of waste is going to landfill.

Minister Gerretsen stressed that waste diversion is already helping to drive Ontario's green economy, with projections that 7,000 new jobs could be created. "Those jurisdictions that make the transformation early will gain the competitive advantage in the global green economy," said the Minister.

He also touched on what was to come in the report, highlighting the move to 100% extended producer responsibility (EPR). IC&I waste was also touched on. Under the proposed changes, there will no longer a differentiation between IC&I and residential waste streams, a move the Minister hopes lead to an increase in the current IC&I diversion rate of 12%.

The review of the blue box program featured briefly in Mr. Gerretsen's speech, with an emphasis on transitioning to full EPR.

The text of the Minister's speech is available at [www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/about/minister/speeches/101909.php](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/about/minister/speeches/101909.php).

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# Why 50% support was never 50% for municipal recycling programs

Ontario's 2002 Waste Diversion Act was quite clear: 50% of the net cost of recycling would be paid by industry.

Well, that was the idea. It has never happened. And now, municipalities face deductions from whatever money is earmarked for them if they don't demonstrate a commitment to Best Practices.

The recent developments have been building for some years, as industry pushes for more efficiency, and thus reduced costs, at the curb. (And now that it faces the prospect of paying the whole shot—at some point—there is great pressure to use what are essentially municipal funds to make recycling even more efficient.)

Back in 2003, when the money started to flow, no one really knew how much it actually cost to provide the program, and the people who were in the best position to guess, came up with a number far lower than the reality.

## JUST DO IT

At the time, with the Act passed and everyone anxious to get things moving, there was some urgency for industry and municipal representatives, working as a sub-committee of Waste Diversion Ontario (WDO), to come up with some number – any number – so the cheques could start being drawn.

The result was a negotiated number, which was necessary given that the municipalities were inclined to guess high and the industry delegates were inclined to guess low. The number they eventually came up with was \$62.5 million, half of which would be \$31.25 million.

Then, once the annual Datacall was adjusted to include financial information, the real numbers came in. Those numbers put the net cost of recycling in excess of \$100 million—a lot higher than anyone expected.

As a result, the Province suggested some revisions were in order—and “cost containment” became the buzzwords of the day.

Tied in with these efforts was the establishment of “reasonable costs”, cost bands and other measures aimed at incenting greater efficiency.

There was more discussion between industry and municipal representatives and subsequently the development of a cost containment strategy was approved by the WDO board.

A new number was recommended as the basis for funding payments. That number was \$84 million.

Given the stipulation in the Act that the payments be based on 50% of the net costs, questions were raised about the legality of basing payments on a lesser number. At the October 29, 2003 WDO board meeting, however, a motion to adopt \$84 million as the net municipal calculation for 2004 stewards' fees was passed.

## ENHANCEMENTS

On December 22, 2003, the Ontario Environment Minister of the day, Leona Dombrowsky, told WDO that she had approved the Blue Box Program Plan. In her letter, the Minister also requested that WDO propose “new measures or enhancements to existing measures” that included:

- specific cost containment principles for municipalities and stewards to follow;
- policies and practices that will ensure compliance with cost containment principles, and
- policies and practices to encourage effectiveness and efficiency for municipal Blue Box systems

WDO's Municipal Industry Program Committee (MIPC) was tasked with further developing these strategies. The MIPC membership is listed on the WDO

website ([www.wdo.ca/content/?path=page81+item126219](http://www.wdo.ca/content/?path=page81+item126219)). There are no minutes posted for this committee.

The work completed by MIPC, combined with what was learned from the 2003 Datacall, led to the establishment the Effectiveness & Efficiency (E&E) Fund.

Under the arrangement, 10% of monies coming from industry to support municipal recycling costs were set aside to fund projects aimed at increasing efficiency and hence reducing costs.

## OVERSIGHT BY MIPS

The fund was administered by Stewardship Ontario, with oversight by MIPC. Final funding decisions were made by Stewardship Ontario's board, based on recommendations from Stewardship Ontario's Projects Committee. Eleven peer reviewers (six public sector and five private sector) provided input to the evaluation of proposals.

The E&E Fund was subsequently succeeded by the Continuous Improvement Fund. The fund operates as a committee of MIPC with direction from the CIF Committee.

That committee included two representatives from Ontario municipalities (one from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), and one from City of Toronto, two members from Stewardship Ontario, one independent member-at-large, the Executive Director of WDO, the Director of the CIF and a non-voting independent chair (see [www.wdo.ca/cif/contact.html](http://www.wdo.ca/cif/contact.html)).

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In  
depth

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# Commit to Best Practices or you will lose money, municipalities told

*Continued from 4/8*

The CIF budget formula is twice that of its predecessor; it gets 20% of the annual cash contribution of Blue Box stewards to Ontario municipalities. Approximately \$13 million in funding was available for 2008.

It was MIPC's job to oversee this work and to make recommendations to WDO and SO for distribution of funds. Any proposed changes in the allocation funding model made by MIPC were submitted to the WDO Board of Directors for approval.

**Simply put...  
failure to answer the  
questions confirming  
progress towards Blue  
Box Best Practices will  
cost municipalities  
money.**

## **TWO-YEAR-OLD DATA**

Over the years, the annual net recycling cost has steadily increased. The calculation for a given year's payments was based on two-year-old data and cost information.

For the 2004, 2005 and 2006 funding years, what was known as the Municipal Funding Allocation Model (MFAM) was used to determine the level of Blue Box funding to municipalities.

It was complicated. The model was based on tonnes recycled by material, taking into account material density; total households and population density, program costs and material revenues.

For the 2007 funding year, MIPC recommended a funding distribution methodology based on a move toward the gradual implementation of Best Practices.

As noted above, this time just 80% of the industry funding was shared by all municipal programs, with the remaining 20% deducted for efficiency and effectiveness projects via the CIF.

For the 2008/2009 funding years, the bar was raised and direct penalties

applied for those not meeting efficiency targets. A series of "cost bands" were established as a way of measuring efficiency.

In preparation for determining the 2008 system cost for the purposes of setting 2010 stewards fees, MIPC has undertaken the task of defining Best Practices through the development of what is known as the Best Practice Cost Model. MIPC has now updated the model with data from the 2008 Datacall. The results of that exercise were released November 9 (see [www.wdo.ca](http://www.wdo.ca)).

The Model output indicates that the residential Blue Box system operating at Best Practices in 2008 would cost \$259,984,328 as compared with the 2008 reported Blue Box system gross cost of \$274,245,169. After several adjustments for various reasons and allowing for \$100,138,121 in revenues, the net cost comes in at \$166,985,852 and the stewards' share at \$83,492,926.

## **BEST PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

Municipal staff will have noticed that Best Practice questions were included in the 2008 WDO Datacall, as the bar was nudged up a little further.

For next year, in addition to a hefty slice of the allocation criteria being applied to program performance (40%), 5% of funding municipalities receive will be based on their responses to those Best Practices questions in the Datacall. And this number increases to 15% in 2011 and to 25% in 2012, as does the amount based on performance. By 2012, just 30% of the funding allocation will be based on net cost.

Simply put, as municipal councillors heard at this year's AMO conference, and recycling coordinators

heard at a recent Municipal Waste Association workshop, failure to answer the questions confirming progress towards Blue Box Best Practices will cost municipalities money.

These are the Best Practice areas covered by those questions.

- Development/implementation of an up-to-date Blue Box recycling plan as part of a Waste Diversion System or Integrated Waste Management System.
- Establishing defined performance measures including diversion targets, monitoring objectives and a continuous improvement program.
- Multi-municipal planning approach to collection and processing of recyclables.
- Optimization of operations in collection and processing by following Generally Accepted Principles for procurement and contract management.
- Training of key program staff in core competencies.
- Appropriately planned, designed and funded promotion & education program
- Monitoring and evaluation. Established and enforced policies that induce waste diversion.

If a municipality is unable to answer "yes" to all Best Practice questions in the next Datacall, there will be financial consequences.

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# Environment ministers commit to EPR, approve packaging strategy

Federal, provincial and territorial environment ministers committed to two major waste reduction initiatives at a meeting of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) at the end of October.

Meeting in Kingston, Ontario, the ministers approved in principle a Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). The plan will see the financial and operational responsibility for managing waste moved from municipalities and onto producers: brand owners, manufacturers and first importers.

Under the plan, producers will be encouraged to take responsibility for their products through their entire life-cycle.

Jurisdictions across Canada will work toward developing EPR legislation and/or regulation that allow for action on a list of priority products and materials within six years of the adoption of the EPR Action Plan. They will also establish operational EPR programs for all packaging within that period.

## SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING STRATEGY

Ministers also approved in principle the Sustainable Packaging Strategy, which outlines short- and long-term measures to improve packaging sustainability.

The strategy adopts an EPR basis, clearly stating that “producers bear the primary responsibility for managing packaging.”

It lays out nine supporting measures to increase awareness of sustainable packaging, provide incentives for people to make more sustainable choices and to support packaging recovery systems. Supporting measures include:

- negotiating agreements with industry sectors to reduce packaging and improve its sustainability;
- developing a Canada-wide standard and certification program for compostable packaging;
- exploring the potential development of a Canada-wide labelling system for recyclable packaging;
- adopting Canada-wide sustainability indicators to assess the sustainability of packaging over its entire life cycle.
- exploring the establishment of a packaging ombudsman to address consumer complaints regarding excessive packaging.

## CRITICAL STEP

In a press release announcing the approval of these initiatives, Ontario Environment John Gerretsen, the meeting chair, called the CCME's commitment to EPR and sustainable packaging critical steps to reducing

waste from all sectors across Canada.

“I look forward to governments across our country moving even more quickly in the coming years, and to working with industry to make meaningful reductions in packaging,” said Mr. Gerretsen.

To review the full EPR action plan and sustainable packaging strategy, visit [www.ccme.ca](http://www.ccme.ca).

## BC WEEE stewardship plan rescinded

The Western Canada Computer Industry Association (WCCIA) is appealing a decision of the British Columbia Ministry of Environment to rescind its approval of the WCCIA's stewardship plan.

The WCCIA stewardship plan for waste electrical and electronic appliances (WEEE) was conditionally approved October 10, 2007. On July 30 of this year, the Minister of Environment issued a decision to rescind WCCIA's stewardship plan approval as of September 1, 2009.

WCCIA appealed that decision to the BC Environmental Appeal Board. The date of the stewardship program rescission has been extended to March 1, 2010 to allow for the appeals process.

The only approved WEEE stewardship program in the province is operated by Electronics Stewardship Association of BC (ESABC).

## Quebec recycling operators receive \$46.3 million for 2007

Quebec municipalities or organizations responsible for curbside recycling are sharing \$46.3 million in compensation from Éco Entreprises Québec (ÉEQ). The funds are to offset costs from 2007.

ÉEQ represents companies that market containers and packaging and printed material in Quebec. Companies are legally obliged to cover to up 50 % of the cost of municipal recycling programs in the province.

Stewards in Quebec have been warned by ÉEQ to expect a 10 to 15% increase in their fees for 2008, owing in part to greater quantities of materials being collected through municipal curbside programs.

For more information, see [www.ecoentreprises.qc.ca](http://www.ecoentreprises.qc.ca).

**Editor's note.** *There are big changes planned for the funding of Quebec's blue box program, although the operation appears to be staying at the municipal level. See the next issue of PPSReview for more details.*

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## Arcaro moves to StewardEdge

Sherry Arcaro, chair of the board of directors the Municipal Waste Association (formerly the Association of Municipal Recycling Coordinators) and manager of environmental services for the County of Peterborough resigned both positions in early November.

Ms Arcaro will start a new position with StewardEdge on November 24. In her new role, she will work on municipal stewardship issues related to waste electronics, hazardous and special waste, and blue box materials, drawing from her years of experience in the municipal sector.

## E-waste processor seeks changes to quota system

A major waste electronic processor in Ontario has written to Ontario's Environment Minister seeking changes to the current quota system applied by Ontario Electronic Stewardship (OES).

Sims Recycling Solutions President Cindy Coutts said in an October 20 letter to John Gerretsen that the OES quota system "provides a strong disincentive for businesses such as ours to proactively seek WEEE volumes."

She claims more competition in the industry will lead to more diversion of e-waste.

*(Editor's note. We expect the next set of Waste Diversion Ontario board minutes to show that changes are to be made that will allow processors to collect e-waste from ICI generators, outside of the quote system.)*

## Award for Tremblay

Daniel Tremblay, formerly of the Weston Food Group has received the first Canadian Stewardship Award.

The award was given at the third Conference on Canadian Stewardship, held in Montreal in early October. More than 270 delegates attended the conference, which focussed on "sustainable stewardship." Conference organizers plan to present the Canadian Stewardship Award at events in future years. It will recognize companies, organizations and/or individuals for their efforts in producer stewardship in Canada.

Learn more at [www.canadianstewardship.com](http://www.canadianstewardship.com).

## EPSC appoints McMillen

The board of directors of Electronics Product Stewardship Canada (EPSC) has appointed Ralph McMillen, Hewlett-Packard's Supply Chain Operations Vice-President as Interim President.

Mr. McMillen has been involved with EPSC since its inception. For more information visit [www.epsc.ca](http://www.epsc.ca).

## Green packaging symposium

Proceedings from Éco Entreprises Québec's Producing and Consuming in the New Way Symposium are available at EEQ website:

[www.ecoentreprises.qc.ca/anglais/produire\\_consommer\\_autrement.html](http://www.ecoentreprises.qc.ca/anglais/produire_consommer_autrement.html)

The October 19-20 symposium, held in Montreal, featured speakers discussing the economic and environmental benefits for companies "going green." The event attracted more than 200 delegates.

## COMING EVENTS

### November 24, 2009

Waste Diversion Ontario Workshop/Webcast  
Consultation: Recycling Printed Papers  
& Packaging in Ontario  
Toronto, Ontario  
(416) 226-5113  
[www.wdo.ca](http://www.wdo.ca)

### November 25 - 26, 2009

Ontario West Municipal Conference  
London, Ontario  
(877) 426-6527  
[www.amo.on.ca](http://www.amo.on.ca)

### December 2 - 3, 2009

OWMA Symposium  
Organics Waste Processing in Ontario  
Mississauga, Ontario  
(905) 791-9500  
[www.owma.org](http://www.owma.org)

### December 4, 2009

Ontario Recycler Workshop  
Toronto, Ontario  
416-323-0101  
[www.wdo.ca/cif/orw.html](http://www.wdo.ca/cif/orw.html)

### January 31 - February 3, 2010

Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association  
105th Annual Convention  
Regina, Saskatchewan  
(306) 525-4379.  
[www.suma.org](http://www.suma.org)

### February 21 - 24, 2010

Rural Ontario Municipal Association/Ontario Good  
Roads Association Conference  
Toronto, Ontario  
(905) 795-2555  
[www.ogra.org](http://www.ogra.org)

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# Opinion Piece

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

## Finally, Ontario talks about tackling the two gorillas

By Jay Arthur

Well, the future of waste policy in Ontario certainly looks a little different today than it did in the early 2000s.

When the Waste Diversion Act was under development it seemed everyone and his or her dog were making presentation to the powers-that-were. Many of those presenters pointed out some of the more obvious weaknesses in the Act. Some of these submissions were duly recorded in this publication as the Hansard Follies, as I recall.

So it was with some anticipation that we all waited to see if Ontario's Environment Minister John Gerretsen would follow up on the EPR message he has been espousing of late when the mandatory five-year review was concluded.

We all read the speech notes carefully after he made his annual Waste Reduction Week address. It was a bit light in substance, but that was understandable given that his report was almost ready and he wouldn't want to pre-empt it. There was not however, any sign of a retreat from the EPR principle. And that was good.

The 31-page report emerged shortly afterwards, with the meat appearing about halfway through.

There is some fairly progressive stuff in there, and it seems pretty clear that his ministry has been talking to people and paying attention.

The change of focus to individual producer responsibility opens the door to more flexibility and creativity than that bureaucrat's manifesto known as Bill 90 that spawned the WDA.

The reporting requirements do look a bit onerous however, and the required paperwork could make the gun registry look like a walk in the park.

There are always two 362.8-kilo gorillas in the room when stewardship conversations are taking place. And, to his credit, the minister has addressed them both.

The first, of course, is incineration, although most prefer to promote it as energy recovery. We can get into the actual net gain in energy terms another time, but there is no question there is a lot of lobbying going on in Canada's newest

**For all the progress made in the past and more recently with the sexy stuff like the blue box, household hazardous waste and electronics, diversion of ICI waste is still in the dark ages.**

have-not province. And some of it has been successful.

Durham/York are committed to an energy-from-waste (EFW) plant near the Darlington nuclear site. The Brampton EFW seems to work quite nicely, and has done for many years. The Plasco test plant serving Ottawa could well turn into a full-size facility at some point. It seems inevitable that at least some Ontario tires will become fuel at some point.

Given this momentum, you can imagine how many well-dressed gentleman and lady lobbyists have been walking the halls of Queen's Park extolling the benefits of counting energy recovery as part of a waste diversion strategy, as they have been here in Vancouver.

So it was time for some clarification on the concept of diversion (heck, even the WDO folks have had trouble with this in the past).

The minister's report notes there was a "robust discussion" on this issue—that is code for "some folks got red in the face, some stamped their feet and other pounded the table".

While the straight burning of waste is an impossible sell, adding energy recovery has often been seen as a way to make it palatable. The report however, only talks about "material recovery". That will be counted as diversion, it notes. And it goes on to say any energy recovered would not count towards meeting diversion obligations. That's pretty clear. Pyrolysis for tires and aerobic digestion for organics appear to be fine, however.

The other gorilla has been sitting silent for some time. This would be the huge industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) waste sector, which accounts for the majority of the waste out there.

For all the progress made in the past and more recently with the sexy stuff like the blue box, household hazardous waste and electronics, diversion of ICI waste is still in the dark ages. We can blame the successive Ontario Governments for not enforcing their own 3Rs Regulations, but until something is done about the gap in cost between doing the right thing (diversion) and doing the wrong thing (disposal), it's an uphill battle. The proposed disposal levy is a start.

The hard part will be for Mr. McGuinty to hold his ground when Mike Harris's reincarnation, Tim Hudak, stands up in the opposition benches and complains about more taxes on long-suffering Ontarions.

We'll be watching.

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