

PPSReview

MANAGING WASTE RESPONSIBLY

**Product & Packaging
Stewardship Review**

**An information service for municipal governments
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National media, questions in the House for WEEE Program

COLLECTS JUST 40% OF TARGET IN FIRST YEAR

For a program whose poor performance may be partly due to lack of promotion, Ontario's new waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) program received some very big headlines in May and even questions in the Ontario Legislature.

Ontario Electronic Stewardship (OES), the industry funding organization responsible for managing e-waste in the province, collected less than half of its target.

Starting in April 2009, OES had a target of 42,000 tonnes of waste electronics in its first year. About 40% of that amount, about 17,000 tonnes, has been collected to date.

The program, funded through the collection of eco fees of \$2 to \$26 on the purchase of new electronics, has collected an estimated \$40 million since April 2009.

In a recent *Toronto Star* article, Carol Hochu, OES executive director,

attributed the lack of success as growing pains, noting it is the program's first year.

The problem came to light in January.

With only 12,000 tonnes collected, Waste Diversion Ontario (WDO) filed a "failure to comply" notice against OES.

According to WDO board meeting minutes from January 27 of this year, OES representatives responded to this notice by pointing out that some municipalities are not collecting some items and the stewards are not assisting OES by promoting the OES program in stores.

WDO approves thermostat recovery program

Building on its existing *Switch the 'Stat* program, the Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institute (HRAI) of Canada received approval of its Industry Stewardship Plan (ISP) for mercury containing thermostats from Waste Diversion Ontario on March 24.

This is the first time that an industry group will run a program outside of an Industry Funding Organization (IFO).

HRAI will be responsible for the full cost of recovering older mercury-containing thermostats from disposal. Stewardship Ontario's Municipal Household and Special Waste IFO is responsible for all other mercury-containing devices.

Switch the 'Stat, established in 2007, sees more than 1,300 HVAC contractors and wholesalers recovering mercury-containing thermostats. The ISP will see the program expanded to other collection channels, such as return-to-retail. HRAI hopes to create a harmonized, national program based on the success of *Switch the 'Stat*.

As major thermostat manufacturers no longer make mercury-containing switches, the HRAI program expects to see decreasing numbers of switches collected over time.

For more information visit: http://www.summerhillgroup.ca/eng/documents/impact/switch-the-stat/Ontario_ISP_Thermostats_2009_Oct.pdf

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Briefly...

“Clever bag” replaces shoe box

Footwear manufacturer Puma recently launched the new look of its shoe boxes. After almost two years of looking for ways to reduce waste and shipping costs, the running shoe giant decided the best box was not a box at all. Puma claims the new Clever Little Bag will reduce its cardboard use by 65% and save 8,500 tonnes of paper. The company released a video highlighting the new packaging that can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwRulz8hPKI.

Puma, April 13, 2010

safe.puma.com/us/en/category/environmental/

Industry study says recycling plastics saves energy

Recycling PET and HDPE plastics results in significant savings in energy and greenhouse gas emissions. So says a study sponsored by the American Chemistry Council (ACC) and three US-based plastic recycling associations. The study looked at a life-cycle analysis of recycling versus creating new plastic resins. The report finds that the amount of energy saved by recycling PET and HDPE in the US in 2008 was the equivalent of the annual energy used by 750,000 homes. Or in carbon dioxide reductions, the same as taking 360,000 cars of the road each year. The study, *Final Report—Life Cycle Inventory of 100% Postconsumer HDPE and PET Recycled Resin from Postconsumer Containers and Packaging*, is available on the ACC website. *American Chemistry Council, April 28, 2010*

www.americanchemistry.com

\$410 billion — the world market for waste

What can US \$410 billion get you these days? The world market for waste, from collection to recycling. The figures come from a new study commissioned by environmental services company Veolia. *From Waste to Resource* is a survey of worldwide waste in 2009, and is the second such report from Veolia. The report includes information on municipal recycling and composting rates by country, among other statistics. Among the findings—while waste production is correlated to gross domestic product (GDP), collection and recovery rates vary widely. For example, Poland sends 90% of its municipal waste to landfill; the Netherlands, 1.7% (although the Dutch incinerate more than 30%).

Veolia, released spring 2010

www.veolia-environmentalservices.com/veolia/resources/files/1/927,753,Abstract_2009_GB-1.pdf

Recycling “Dream Machines”

Pepsi Co plans to install thousands of recycling kiosks, which they have named “Dream Machines,” in public locations across the US, including gas stations, stadiums and public parks. Users will collect reward points for each bottle recycled, which can be redeemed at Greenopolis.com. Pepsi hopes to make recycling more convenient while working towards its goal of increasing US beverage container recycling rates to 50% by 2018. Currently 34% of beverage containers are recycled. The first machines will be rolled out in southern California. In North Carolina, 150 kiosks are planned for Rite Aid pharmacies.

Pepsi Co, April 22, 2010

<http://pepsico.presslift.com/>

Japanese sports fans reuse their way to victory

512 kilograms of carbon dioxide. That’s what Kawasaki, Japan, was able to save by switching to reusable food containers at the local Todoroki Stadium during soccer games from April to November of 2009. The self-service collection program for the food containers proved very successful, with 98.5% of the 32,780 reusable plates and utensils dispensed at 20 games returned. The use of reusable food containers at Kawasaki Frontale home games was the first initiative of “Carbon Challenge Todoroki,” a joint venture between the city, the Frontale, a local Fujitsu factory and the city’s parks.

Japan for Sustainability, April 21, 2010

www.japanfs.org

New plastic from waste cellulose

UK researchers have developed a new type of biodegradable plastic made from gluconolactone. Researchers report that the new plastic will decompose faster and at lower temperatures than the current biodegradable plastic favourite, PLA (polylactic acid). The new plastic can be made from cellulose biomass, a waste product, whereas PLA is made from either corn or sugar beets, putting PLA production in competition with food production. The new material may have other applications (in medical applications, for example), as the degradation products are non-toxic. Researchers are now working commercial partners to make bring the plastic to market, optimistically within five years.

Resource Recovery Forum, February 23, 2010

www.resourcesnotwaste.org/

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

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

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Horror of horrors: wine in plastic bottles

FRENCH STUDY SHOWS TASTE AFFECTED

Is nothing sacred?

UK-based Marks & Spencer has converted all 19 varieties of its 250 ml wine bottles from glass to plastic in an effort to reduce packaging.

The company says the new PET bottles have a special layer in the plastic that keeps oxygen, wine's greatest enemy, out. The bottles are 88% lighter than glass, using less energy to produce and less fuel to transport. With 100,000 mini-bottles sold each week, M&S estimates it will save 525 tonnes of packaging each year.

The lightweight, shatterproof bottles are expected to be popular with picnickers this summer (*although the nylon layer may affect the bottles' recyclability—editor*).

According to a study by the Institute of Vine and Wine Sciences (www.isvv.fr/isvv_eng/isvv_recherche) of Bordeaux, white wine stays fresh for only six months when it is in plastic bottles and bags.

The French research group measured the amounts of gases in different wine packaging over one year and tested the color and taste of the

wines at regular intervals.

Red and white Bordeaux wines in 75cl and 18.7cl glass, single-layer PET and multi-player PET bottles, and bag-in-box packaging were all tested.

The white wine in plastic bottles and bags had an increase in oxygen along with decreases in carbon dioxide and sulfur dioxide (used to protect wine from bacteria and oxygen), with the most significant changes noticed in the smaller bottles. Those wines also had a "rotten fruit flavor" and significant color changes according to the group of 25 expert and novice tasters.

Quota system "a disincentive" to WEEE processors

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The \$165 per tonne collection incentive fee was also highlighted as playing a role in the poor first-year performance.

Earlier this month at Queen's Park, Progressive Conservative MP Toby Barrett criticized Environment Minister John Gerretsen for the government's "abysmal record" with regards to waste diversion.

Mr. Barrett asked what people are paying for, if so much of e-waste is going overseas or to landfill.

Mr. Gerretsen countered by pointing out the Waste Diversion Act that set-up the funding system currently in place was developed when the PCs were in power.

Since taking office, the Liberals have been making "substantive changes" to fix the problems with the system, said the minister.

SO WHERE HAVE ALL THE TVs GONE?

The OES system is supposed to see designated collectors (companies, municipalities or non-profits) pick up used electronics, for which they are paid a handling fee out of the \$40 million raised through eco fees.

OES takes all these materials and allocates them to eight approved

WEEE processors in the province based on a quota system.

In a recent letter to OES in response to a review of the system, Cindy Coutts, president of Sims Recycling Solutions-Canada, the largest approved WEEE processor in Ontario, points out what she sees as two major flaws.

Many collectors have opted out of the OES program as they can sell WEEE materials for a lot more than the amount OES offers. Materials may end up going to overseas processors, where environmental and safety concerns can be lax. Or they are removing the valuable components from the materials, metals, for example, and then landfilling the rest. The quota system removes any competitive incentives to do better, says Ms Coutts in her widely-distributed letter.

"These program design elements ensure that no matter what a WEEE processor does in terms of 'chasing' new WEEE volumes (lower pricing, better environmental or technical outcomes), OES will effectively appropriate any incremental volumes of the set quota thus blocking that processor from growing its business."

"If OES is to meet its environmental objectives in an economically efficient manner its only recourse is a competitive open market

model predicated on an environmental standard that is rigorously overseen and enforced," says Ms Coutts.

STILL MOVING AHEAD WITH PHASE 2

Despite these set-backs, Minister John Gerretsen and Ms Hochu announced at a news conference in April that the WEEE program would expand, with Phase 2 including cell phones, radios and cameras.

The government is also looking at banning e-waste from landfill as part of the Waste Diversion Act changes coming in the near future.

OES is scheduled to present the results of the Review of WEEE Material Flow Arrangements at a one hour web-based meeting on Wednesday, May 26, 2010.

For more information, visit www.ontarioelectronicstewardship.ca.

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We are not taking our foot off the pedal, Gerretsen tells WDO annual meeting

(Ontario's environment minister John Gerretsen is sticking to his guns on full EPR but seems to be opening the door to energy from waste. Here is the substance of his remarks to the Waste Diversion Ontario (WDO) annual general meeting, April 27. Judge for yourself — editor.)

Today, I would like to provide you with an update on where we are and offer a glimpse of where we are heading.

I can tell you unequivocally that how we view and manage waste in Ontario is changing. Frankly, it has to.

Ontario has a real waste problem. We make too much of it, around a tonne per person per year, and too much of that goes to landfill.

I hear from Ontarians all the time, asking how we can do better — especially when it comes to things like reducing packaging. Consumers are trying to do their part by recycling and composting. They are telling us to go further and go faster.

I couldn't agree more. We can't continue doing things the same way and expect different results.

Diversion rates are abysmal. Combined residential and industrial, commercial and institutional diversion rates are stagnating at around 22 per cent.

Our government is determined to increase waste diversion rates dramatically. The fact is, the world has changed and we need to change with it.

People have a much greater awareness than ever before of our need to recycle more and divert more. There is no longer tolerance for the old ways of dealing with waste. We all know we can do better than digging holes and burying it.

NEW APPROACH

It's obviously time for a new approach: one that recognizes the need for sustainability in all our actions.

I've said this many times before and I'll say it again here. We need to

recognize the value of waste as a resource, where second and third generation products become the raw material for new products.

The upside is — this benefits both business and the environment.

A recent U.S. study demonstrated how the recycling and reuse industry creates a large number of jobs that pay over the national average, generates gross revenues of more than \$236 billion a year, with \$173 billion a year in indirect economic activity. Similarly, research shows Ontario diversion programs result in significant net economic benefits including a large

number of jobs that pay above the provincial average.

We intend to make sure Ontario has a significant presence in the growing recycling and reuse sector. That is where our review of the Waste Diversion Act is taking us.

WASTE DIVERSION ACT REVIEW

We see a renewed waste framework for Ontario that centres on three things: it's about extended producer responsibility, it's about increasing diversion to better protect our environment ... and it's about efficiency ... creating cost savings and opportunities in a new, sustainable economy.

By moving toward full, extended producer responsibility, we move away from having municipalities, taxpayers and businesses pay to manage waste they didn't create in the first place.

This is a realistic and logical step. Producers control the decisions surrounding products and packaging.

Instead of putting the onus on consumers, whether business or household, and municipalities to deal with this material at the back-end, we are putting the responsibility at the front end of the process.

As you know, our proposal makes individual producers responsible and focuses on outcomes, rather than processes.

We want to encourage flexibility on how to reach those outcomes.

And we are proposing supporting measures such as a landfill levy and even banning certain materials from disposal to help meet those expectations. We are also proposing transition plans for existing diversion programs.

Thanks to all of you who provided your input and who took part in the consultation process. We have heard what you have to say and many good ideas have been generated that we can use going forward.

During the consultation period, the comments we heard were generally supportive of our approach, including the philosophy of producer responsibility, flexibility on meeting obligations and the supporting measures we proposed.

We heard that the current system needs to focus more on outcomes. We heard industry is looking for greater flexibility. And along with flexibility, we heard we need to be clear on accountability and determine who is responsible for outcomes. We also heard that there needs to be consequences — without consequences there is no pressure to meet the outcomes.

That all makes sense.

It's important that we continue to keep the lines of communication open and hear your opinions. We are serious about making progress — and you'll be hearing about next steps very soon.

While nothing has been finalized at this point, we don't expect much deviation from our proposed approach.

We want to leverage new businesses opportunities in the evolving new economy as quickly as possible.

“Diversion rates are abysmal.”

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“We will be consulting with you on the changes..”

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It's clear we are in a transition period and there are changes coming. At the same time, I want assure you that we recognize the need to dig into the issues more deeply to make sure we make all the links and connect all the dots.

We will be consulting with you on the changes as they occur, on existing programs and new requirements.

Let me assure you we are not going to throw out all the work that's been done to bring in new programs or make wholesale changes just for the sake of change.

There are many different views. We respect that.

Let me also say that some assumptions may no longer be relevant or accurately reflect our 21st century world. For example, many still assume that all energy from waste is bad for the environment. But modern technologies are greatly improved.

On a recent trip to Holland, in advance of the climate change conference in Copenhagen, I had the opportunity to tour the City of Amsterdam's Waste and Energy Company.

This is the largest energy from waste facility in the world. It can process 1.5 million tonnes of waste and sewage sludge annually, supplying 30 per cent of Amsterdam's electricity and hot water.

WE NEED TO CHALLENGE ASSUMPTIONS

On many fronts, we need to challenge the old assumptions and look for new innovative processes that are more sustainable and fully protective of the environment.

Surely it is better to recover some value from waste that can't be recycled,

than to landfill it and get nothing.

Recycling is the number one priority — energy from waste may have a role, but not at the expense of the 3Rs.

As we move to a new waste management framework, there will be a natural transition period between what we have now and what will be coming. That doesn't mean we take our foot off the pedal. We need to keep up the momentum. In fact, we see this as an opportunity for producers to get busy, get creative and come up with their own plans. Don't wait for the government to regulate — take a pro-active approach and develop your own plans ahead of the curve.

Momentum is building on extended producer responsibility and Ontario is leading the way towards well-developed and accountable diversion practices.

We're also seeing action on EPR in forward-thinking North American jurisdictions like Maine, Vermont, and Quebec. And we're already seeing the economic spin-offs of our new diversion programs. New innovative businesses are setting up here to take advantage of the opportunities in the recycling sector.

Companies like Entropex are innovating in plastics recycling. Many new tire and electronic recycling facilities are expanding and setting up shop in Ontario — creating jobs and fostering economic growth. These companies are seeing the opportunities for growth in the recycling industry.

There are many businesses taking the initiative and looking seriously at incorporating sustainability throughout their operations, and not just in the recycling sector.

Just last week, I attended Walmart's fourth annual Earth Day Sustainability conference. Walmart and a number of other large companies and their suppliers, are taking a stand on

waste, on packaging and on procurement processes that consider the environmental costs. That kind of leadership needs to be recognized and applauded. It also needs to be expanded across the board to other products and other businesses.

OPEN ONTARIO

Our government is fully committed to helping support the innovations that protect the environment and power a strong, lower carbon economy. We're open for the kind of business that will leave a better world for the next generation. Our five-year Open Ontario Plan is going to help get us there.

The plan is about boosting our competitiveness, encouraging investment in the province and creating jobs for Ontarians. It's about making the most of the leading-edge, clean industry solutions and products Ontario has to offer. It's also about modernizing approvals to make it easier and more convenient for business and to encourage investment and growth.

We need and want Ontario businesses to be successful. That's a given. But, at the same time, let's pause and ask ourselves “what kind of legacy do we want to leave for the future?”. How can we, in our own way, make a difference?

So, today, I want to leave you with a challenge. Take the initiative, don't wait. Be innovative, be bold and be creative.

Find the opportunities in the new, green economy — and do the right thing for your business and for the environment.

“Recycling is the number one priority — energy from waste may have a role, but not at the expense of the 3Rs.”

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New e-waste added in Saskatchewan

RESIDENTS AND IC&I ASKED TO "SWEEP UP" NEW MATERIALS

As of April 1, 2010, residents in Saskatchewan were able to recycle more electronics at the province's SARCAN recycling depots.

SWEEP, the Saskatchewan Waste Electronic Equipment Program, has added five new product categories to its program:

- personal/portable audio/video playback and/or recording systems (including cameras)
- home audio/video systems
- home theatres in a box
- vehicle audio and video systems
- non-cellular telephones and answering machines

"The expansion reflects public demand for more recycling options and a commitment to product stewardship from the electronics industry and retailers," SWEEP Executive Joan Meyer in an April press release.

SWEEP is a non-profit corporation established by manufacturers, retailers, and other stakeholders to coordinate the collection and recycling of obsolete

electronic equipment.

SWEEP is funded by an environmental handling fee charged on the purchase of new equipment. The fee reflects the actual cost to recycle materials in the product when it has reached its end of life.

The fees in the expanded list of products range from \$0.40 for a portable CD player to \$6.00 for a home theatre system.

The new product categories are in addition to the computers, televisions and printers currently recyclable through the program.

Approximately 12 million pounds of e-waste has been diverted from the waste stream since 2007.

SWEEP is also expanding its



collection services to including e-waste from the industrial, commercial and institutional (IC&I) sectors.

Organizations that are collecting large volumes of e-waste for recycling will be eligible for direct pick-up services, so long as they have:

- A minimum of three pallets and/or boxes for major population centres; specifically Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina, and Saskatoon.
- A minimum of five pallets and/or boxes for all other areas.

SWEEP issued a request for expressions of interest for transportation and consolidation services for the IC&I program in March. Submissions to this request will be accepted until May 17.

For more information visit www.sweepit.ca.

Buyer sought for Ontario glass processing plant

After sinking a lot of money into a mixed glass processing plant only to see it go into receivership, the organization representing the stewards who provided the financing is confident a new buyer will be found.

Unical Glass, which operates the new plant in Brampton, Ontario, stopped accepting new shipments of blue box glass the week of April 19. The closure affects several Toronto-area municipalities, including Hamilton, Peel, York and Durham, in addition to the City of Toronto.

The plant was Stewardship Ontario's first major market-development initiative. Unical received a \$1.75 million grant from Stewardship Ontario in 2008 to purchase equipment for the state-of-the-art facility.

"We have been closely monitoring the situation from the outset," states Lyle Clarke, Stewardship Ontario's VP of operations, in a April 26 *e-Lert* newsletter.

"We're confident that a buyer will emerge, so that processing of municipal mixed broken glass can resume in Ontario."

According to the *e-Lert*, the Unical facility has already reduced blue box costs "to the point that Stewardship Ontario has recouped its investment."

At its launch, the Unical already had seven-year contracts with five area municipalities, including Hamilton, Peel, Toronto, York and Durham, which were estimated to achieve savings of \$10 million over seven years.

Stewardship Ontario says media reports about the demise of end markets for glass recycling "may be premature".

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No more phone books in New York?

The *New York Times* reported on May 7 that Verizon, the city's largest phone service provider, has asked state regulators to allow the company to stop providing the telephone book white pages.

Verizon cites a 2008 Gallop-poll study that showed only one in nine households use the white pages, with most looking up numbers online or calling directory assistance.

The move could save as much as 5,000 tons (US) of paper.

Verizon has made the same request to regulators in the state of New Jersey. AT&T has already made this change in several states, including Florida, Ohio and Oklahoma.

The US-based Product Stewardship Institute has run a phone book project since 2006, with goals of reducing the number of unwanted phone books produced and increasing the implementation of environmentally sound practices where the books are concerned. Details about their project can be found at www.productstewardship.us (*not to be confused with the PPSReview website, which is at www.productstewardship.org—editor.*).

New procedures for ISPs from WDO

Following review of a number of Industry Stewardship Plans over the fall of 2009 and early 2010, Waste Diversion Ontario has revised the Procedures for Industry Stewardship Plans, originally developed in 2004, to clarify submission requirements and update the evaluation procedure.

To view the revised Procedures for Industry Stewardship Plans dated May 12, 2010 visit <http://www.wdo.ca/files/domain4116/Final%20Revised%20Procedures%20for%20ISPs%20May%2012%202010.pdf>.

WDO issues RFP for performance audits

On May 20th Waste Diversion Ontario (WDO) released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Performance Audits of Ontario Waste Diversion Programs.

The primary objectives of this project will be to:

- Develop performance audit protocols and methodologies applicable to all waste diversion programs approved under the Waste Diversion Act;
- Develop, in consultation with the appropriate IFO, audit plans for auditing the Blue Box Program and the MHSW Program operated by Stewardship Ontario; and the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) program operated by Ontario Electronic Stewardship (OES); and
- Conduct performance audits of the Blue Box Program, Phase 1 of the MHSW Program and Phase 1 of the WEEE Program.

A copy of the RFP is available at: <http://www.wdo.ca/files/domain4116/Final%20RFP%20for%20Audit%20of%20Multiple%20Programs%20May%202010%20with%20Appendix.pdf>.

Proposals are due at 4:00 p.m., Friday June 18, 2010.

COMING EVENTS

May 25—27

Recycling Council of British Columbia
Annual Zero Waste Conference
Whistler, BC
(604) 683-6009, ext. 314
www.rcbc.ca.ca

June 29

Conference on Canadian Stewardship
Webcast
www.canadianstewardship.com

August 15—18

Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
Annual Conference
Windsor, ON
416-971-9856
www.amo.on.ca

September 22—24

20th Annual National Compost Conference
Ottawa, ON
1-877-571-GROW
www.compost.org

October 13—15

Recycling Council of Alberta
Annual Waste Reduction Conference
Lake Louise, AB
403-843-6563
www.recycle.ab.ca

October 21

Recycling Council of Ontario Waste Minimization Awards,
Toronto, ON
416 657.2797 x4
www.rco.on.ca

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Opinion Piece

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

Memo to US bottle bill states: Hang on to your drawers

by Jay Arthur

Seven years ago, I was moved by some weird goings-on in British Columbia to write a column urging the good burghers of this province to beware Greeks bearing gifts.

Well, they weren't Greeks, but they were from the East. To a westerner that usually means Ontario, and that usually means Toronto. It is part of Western Canadian folklore that anyone from Toronto is automatically presumed to think the world, or even the universe, revolves around that fair city.

In the case of the well-dressed men who were offering BC programs big dollars to abandon their deposit-return beverage container collection system, they were quite right.

In what can best be described as an exercise in hubris squared, it was being suggested the Ontario model was not only more efficient than the BC model but also would be cheaper for municipalities.

Essentially, to use a somewhat indelicate (and possibly vulgar but extremely accurate) analogy, BC municipalities were being asked to drop their drawers for cash.

At the time, BC was leading the country in its approach to extended producer responsibility (EPR). While its blue box program did not receive funding from industry, it didn't have to look after beverage containers, either; industry did. And other materials were part of a long list of government-regulated, industry-funded recovery programs. This list has continued to grow.

Ontario didn't at that point have any support from industry, except for the occasional scrap of bread thrown at the peasants when they became restless.

Legislation was, however, slowly being developed based on what was euphemistically described as the "shared responsibility model".

The alleged, but never actually achieved, 50/50 split that was called for by the Waste Diversion Act of 2003 was turned on its head when Ontario's environment minister John Gerretsen started calling for stewardship plans for

"The only number that counts is the one that reflects the percentage of producer/consumer (not taxpayer) responsibility to manage the materials at end of life."

other materials, based on full product stewardship - i.e. 100% funding.

When he reviewed the WDA, he said that should apply to the blue box, too.

It hasn't happened yet for the blue box but Minister Gerretsen has signalled he is determined to make it happen soon. These are heady times for Ontario.

In the end, the boys from Bay Street were unsuccessful in persuading the boys from BC to relinquish the high recovery they get with deposits for the mediocre performance offered by the Ontario system.

Now, it seems, the same gang, acting for US industry interests, is making the rounds of the bottle bill states to the south of us (i.e. those with mandated deposit systems in place).

It's essentially the same pitch—look to Ontario as your role model.

And here's where it gets interesting.

It's not the 2010 Ontario model (i.e. 100% industry support). It's the old 50/50 model that is being touted as the way to go. Fifty-cent dollars are on the table, in exchange for the abandonment of their bottle bills.

The pitch talks about Ontario's high average recovery rate and its relatively low cost. It is likely a very persuasive argument when made by some of the best snake oil salespeople on the continent.

What the argument often leaves out is the role newspapers play in beefing up the numbers and reducing the cost.

And I doubt the argument includes any discussion about how newspaper tonnages are down and how this is affecting the average recovery rate and revenues.

And I doubt the argument includes any discussion about the growing number of hard-to-recycle items that are appearing on store shelves.

And the impact that has on the net cost of recycling.

Recent reports about Delaware repealing its bottle bill for an eco fee run contrary, thank heavens, to recent trends.

A number of states are now looking at expanding bottle bills and/or at EPR to reduce waste and promote recycling.

There will be arguments till kingdom come about who's got the best statistics on recovery (many of them bogus). But the only number that counts is the one that reflects the percentage of producer/consumer (not taxpayer) responsibility to manage the materials at end of life.

And that number should be 100. That is the Ontario model now.

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