



Media Release

Ontario Needs to Scrap its Waste Diversion Act

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Replace

(Queen's Park, April 24, 2013) At a joint media conference at the Ontario Legislature, Recycling Council of Ontario (RCO) and Ontario Waste Management Association (OWMA) called for new legislation that drives and achieves greater waste diversion.

Prior to a new round of eco fees that are scheduled for May 1, 2013, the two organizations declared the current framework for producer responsibility in Ontario is fundamentally flawed and no longer workable. The current *Waste Diversion Act* (WDA) lacks accountability, transparency, oversight, and effective enforcement mechanisms.

"The WDA was introduced in 2002 and a decade later, we continue to expend major resources to do little more than tinker with programs under flawed framework. Since that time, we have seen little improvement in waste diversion and, still over 75 percent of Ontario's materials are lost to disposal," stated Jo-Anne St. Godard, Executive Director, Recycling Council of Ontario.

"The WDA has failed consumers, the economy and our environment," said Peter Hargreave, Director of Policy, Ontario Waste Management Association. He also observed, "Numerous controversies over eco fees, repeatedly missed diversion targets, and major marketplace disruptions illustrate that the current legislation is unworkable."

OWMA and RCO call for a simplified and streamlined approach to Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) that requires individual producers of products and packaging to be fully responsible for ensuring their materials are properly managed at end-of-life, with improved oversight that focuses on results. This approach provides producers the freedom and flexibility to drive recycling results at least cost to consumers.

The proposed reforms are predicated on the RCO and OWMA position that extended producer responsibility is a pivotal waste diversion policy element in most environmentally progressive and effective jurisdictions around the world.

The two organizations contend that embedding the following principles into new EPR legislation would ensure Ontario becomes an environmental and economic leader in waste-related resource management:

- Focus responsibility on individual companies – get rid of agencies that allow producers to 'outsource' their costs and responsibility and allow them to do what they do best: innovate and compete.

- Restrict point-of-sale fees. Recycling costs are a new cost of doing business in Ontario and should be considered in the price of the product, not added at the checkout.
- Government should set the rules (standards, targets) and enforce them with penalties.

“There is an immediate and pressing need to get to the root of the problem so we can focus on the bigger picture,” said Hargreave.

St. Godard continued, “The time to act is now. The government, Ontario PC Party, Ontario NDP, Green Party of Ontario, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario and other stakeholders agree change is necessary and overdue.”

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*The **Ontario Waste Management Association (OWMA)**, founded in 1977, speaks for nearly 300 private and public sector members who provide the products and services for a better environment. Our business is to protect the environment through the proper management of waste and recyclable materials. Learn more about the Ontario Waste Management Association at www.owma.org.*

***Recycling Council of Ontario (RCO)** is a not-for-profit, membership-based organization committed to minimizing society's impact on the environment by eliminating waste. RCO's mission is to inform and educate all members of society about the avoidance of waste, efficient use of resources, and the benefits and/or consequences of these activities. For more, visit www.rco.on.ca.*