

Backgrounder Information



Ministry of
the Environment

Ministère de
l'Environnement

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REDUCING LANDFILL WASTE IN ONTARIO

ONTARIO'S RECYCLING PROGRAM

Ontario's Blue Box is one of the best recycling programs in North America and a pioneer in environmental protection. Adding a container return program for wine and spirit containers will make it even better.

Our first goal in dealing with waste effectively is to divert materials from landfill through the three R's — which means to reduce, reuse and recycle. Ontario municipalities are working hard to increase waste diversion by enhancing recycling through the highly successful Blue Box program. More recently, several municipalities have launched organics diversion programs.

The province is helping both industry and municipalities to manage their waste better by proposing new rules to promote recycling, streamlining approvals and making it easier to adopt innovative waste technologies while continuing to ensure the environment is protected.

Currently, the Blue Box program collects about 68 per cent of glass generated by the LCBO. The Beer Store collects 96 per cent of refillable beer bottles.

A NEW RECYCLING PROGRAM FOR WINE AND SPIRIT CONTAINERS

Starting February 1, 2007, Ontario consumers will pay a deposit on all wine and spirit containers purchased in Ontario at the LCBO, agency stores, and winery and distillery retail stores. The container return program will not include containers used in U-brew and "make your own" wine operations.

Consumers will be able to return empty wine and spirit containers to The Beer Store for a full refund. The Beer Store already operates one of the most successful container return programs in the world.

This program will divert recycling waste from landfill sites and free up space in Blue Boxes, giving municipalities the opportunity to expand recycling programs

A deposit will apply on all wine and spirit containers, including glass and plastic bottles, Tetra Paks, and aluminum cans. Details of the deposit rate structure will be released prior to the program start-up and will be comparable to other jurisdictions in Canada. These currently range from five cents for small containers, up to 40 cents for larger ones.

The Beer Store will handle all post-collection processing and recycling of the wine and spirit containers that they collect. The Beer Store will be expected to operate the program cost efficiently, as they do with their current system, and will be subject to regular audits.

KEY FACTS

The new container return program makes sense because:

- The program could divert up to an additional 25,000 to 30,000 tons of glass from landfill annually. This equates to about 80 million bottles per year.
- This represents about a 32 to 38 per cent increase over the amount of wine and spirit containers currently being recycled through the Blue Box and through recycling by licensed restaurants and bars.
- Collecting wine and spirit containers through a container return will reduce breakage and the amount of solid waste going to landfill.
- The Beer Store has the infrastructure in place to get this system up and running quickly and effectively. It has a 96 per cent recovery rate for refillable bottles.
- Beverage alcohol containers are the largest single source of glass in the Ontario municipal waste stream and account for about seven per cent of all Blue Box waste.
- 68 per cent of beverage alcohol containers are now recovered through the Blue Box system.
- Not all glass from beverage alcohol bottles is currently recycled into higher end uses, like new glass bottles or fiberglass insulation material. This new system will ensure that a greater amount of glass recovered in Ontario gets recycled.

CONTAINER RETURN SYSTEMS IN OTHER PROVINCES

Seven other provinces have container return systems for wine and spirit containers. Deposit rates range from five to 40 cents depending on jurisdiction and container size.

Canada's Atlantic provinces have half-back programs which refund only half of consumer deposits.

The range of deposit rates by jurisdiction is in the chart below:

British Columbia	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Nova Scotia	PEI	New Brunswick	Newfoundland
10 - 20 ¢	5 - 20¢	10 - 40¢	10 - 20¢	10 - 20¢	10 - 20¢	20¢

ONTARIO'S WASTE DIVERSION INITIATIVES

The government has introduced many measures to increase waste diversion, including:

- Waste Diversion Ontario's Blue Box Program Plan, in which affected industry pays 50 per cent of the net costs, will continue. In addition, in the near future the government will be asking WDO to develop diversion programs for electronic waste and household hazardous and special wastes.
- Regulations to create incentives and to make it easier for municipalities to increase recycling and remove barriers that make it costly and/or restrictive for industry to recycle.
- Actions to remove specific approval requirements for converting certain wastes into alternative fuels in order to keep these wastes out of landfills and put them to beneficial use. All air emission approvals would remain in place.
- Removing pilot or demonstration projects, including energy-from-waste technologies, from the environmental assessment process and from mandatory waste hearings for a set period of time. These projects must still adhere to the province's stringent air emission standards.
- A new waste regulation that standardizes the process based on the type, size and impact of the project, making it easier to build recycling facilities.

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