

For Immediate Release
October 19, 2006

TORONTO STUDENTS CONSTRUCT GIANT BLUE BOX MAP OF ONTARIO *Event Marks 25 Years Of Curbside Recycling*

TORONTO — To celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Blue Box, an internationally-recognized symbol of recycling and environmental protection, Environment Minister Laurel Broten today helped 300 Toronto-area elementary and high school students create a Blue Box sculpture in the shape of the province of Ontario.

Students from Cassandra Public School, Don Mills Middle School and Don Mills Collegiate used approximately 1,800 Blue Boxes to complete a 30 metre by 30 metre map of Ontario on the north field of Don Mills Middle School. The participating schools are members of the EcoSchools program, which supports students and staff in caring for and protecting the environment.

“The Blue Box was invented in Ontario, and today it is the most recognized symbol of waste reduction in the world,” said Broten. “These students have known recycling for their whole lives thanks to this breakthrough idea.”

The Blue Box helps divert more than 840,000 tonnes of materials from Ontario landfills each year. The curbside recycling program was piloted in Kitchener, Ontario in 1981. By 1989, the total number of households with the Blue Box service reached one million and soon after, ambassadors for cities around the world came to Ontario to learn about the innovative recycling program. Today, 94 per cent of Ontario households have access to recycling services. Over the past 10 years, the total amount of recyclable materials recovered has increased by 74 per cent.

Ontario’s Blue Box program is sustained through industry funding. In 2006 alone, municipalities will receive \$55.5 million from industry stewards towards the cost of diverting Blue Box materials from disposal sites.

Even with the Blue Box, we still have a lot of work to do to increase diversion rates across Ontario,” Broten said. “We will continue to work with our municipal and industry partners to develop solutions for a wider range of types of waste including electronics and household hazardous waste.”

Note to editor: Photo will be available on ministry's web site at
<http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/news/2006/101901-img.htm>

Contact information for media:

Myra Reisler/Susanne Gossage

Media Profile

(416) 504-8464

myra@mediaprofile.com

susanne@mediaprofile.com

Anne O'Hagan

Minister's Office

(416) 325-5809

Contact information for the general public:

416-325-4000 or 1-800-565-4923/ www.ene.gov.on.ca

Disponible en français