

## Ontario—Recycling is the Last Resort

Ontarians may have invented the Blue Box, but our current linear, make-use-dispose economy makes it impossible for recycling alone to solve our growing waste problem. Currently, less than seven per cent<sup>1</sup> of Ontario’s waste is recycled through the Blue Box, and the province sends over 8 million tonnes (70 per cent)<sup>2</sup> of trash to landfills and incinerators every year.

Now, more than ever we need the Province to adopt a regulation that supports Ontario’s transition to a low-carbon, non-toxic circular economy—a system where products and services are fundamentally redesigned to *prevent* waste, and where companies are financially and operationally responsible for their products after-use (extended producer responsibility—EPR).

### Recycling is not a silver bullet solution

For decades, consumers have been led to believe that recycling is *the* solution to all of our waste woes, but the truth is recycling systems were never designed to manage the volume and complexity of materials on the market. Today, the costs of managing these problematic materials largely falls to municipalities (i.e. taxpayers), meaning there is little incentive for producers to minimize waste and design products for optimal reuse and recycling. That’s why we need to shift the burden back to producers, and incentivize them to design waste out.

### A system for everyone

Ontario’s efforts to divert waste from landfill have largely focused on the residential sector, but two thirds of Ontario’s waste is generated in the Industrial, Commercial and Institutional sector (IC&I). To tackle the waste crisis, Ontario needs to address waste from all areas of our economy—where we live, work *and* play.

### An opportunity

Currently, Ontario is drafting a regulation to address packaging, paper, and packaging-like product waste and reform the Blue Box. **This regulation is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to enable a low-carbon, toxic-free circular economy in Canada’s largest, most populous province.** We need to get it right.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks, “Reducing litter and waste in our communities: discussion paper.” (Online, 2019), page 4

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

We, the undersigned, call on the Ontario provincial government to adopt a packaging, paper, and packaging-like products (PPPP) regulation under the *Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act* (RRCEA) that **drives improvements in reduction, redesign, reuse, collection, and high-value, closed loop recycling, ensuring:**

**Recycling for everyone, everywhere:**

1. Including all sources of PPPP **waste from all sectors** (residential *and* Industrial, Commercial and Institutional properties, etc.)
2. Access to **recycling for all residents**, including those living in multi-unit housing, small communities, and the Far North
3. **Safe management of all products and materials** that producers sell into the Ontario market, including materials not currently collected in the Blue Box
4. Mechanisms to **prevent toxic substances** from contaminating recycling systems and recycled materials

**Strong environmental outcomes:**

5. Definitions of recycling and diversion that **exclude energy and materials recovered from incineration**, energy-from-waste, and all other forms of thermal treatment
6. **High, enforceable diversion targets** that exceed current performance, increase over time, and provide sufficient detail to identify problematic materials and products
7. **Bans on problematic packaging** that is toxic to the environment or human health

**Transparency and accountability:**

8. Comprehensive, and transparent **public reporting requirements** so the public can confirm that producers are meeting targets and service standards, and that problematic products and materials are phased out.
9. Mandatory reporting and disclosure requirements so that **consumers and recyclers know what toxic substances are present in PPPP**

**Transition to circular economy:**

10. True extended producer responsibility, where **all program costs are covered by producers**, and no additional fees are imposed on consumers or users
11. Mandated **minimum recycled content targets** for all PPPP to promote resource conservation and enable a strong circular economy in Ontario

Signatories:





GRAND RIVER ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK





Ontario Nurses for the Environment Interest Group



Ontario  
Zero Waste  
Coalition



The Preservation of  
Agricultural Lands  
Society

PHP4  
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Zero Waste 4 Zero Burning