



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Chair and Members of the Solid Waste Services Committee
From: Das Soligo, Manager of Solid Waste Services
Date: Tuesday, April 11, 2023
Subject: **Blue Box Transition Update**

Background:

Over time, Solid Waste Services (SWS) has brought forward periodic updates to SWS Committee and County of Wellington Council related to the transition of the County's blue box programme to full producer responsibility. Producers of printed paper and packaging (PPP) will become fully responsible for the cost and service provision of recycling programmes by 2026.

In the meantime, producers will transition municipalities and First Nations communities in 3 cohorts, from July 1, 2023 through the end of 2025. The County of Wellington's blue box programme is scheduled to transition on July 1, 2025. Following the transition, it is anticipated that the County will realize \$2 million in annual savings as a result of not paying recycling-related costs.

On March 29, 2023 the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) sent correspondence with some updates related to the transitioning of Ontario's municipal blue box programmes. The following report will provide a brief summary of these updates.

Beverage Container Fees:

The Canadian Beverage Container Recycling Association (CBCRA), an industry association of producers of non-alcoholic sealed beverages, has announced that they are charging additional fees to producers to cover the cost of meeting their recycling capture targets, set by the Resource Recovery and Productivity Authority (RPRA).

The producers of beverage products have decided to pass these mandatory fees on to consumers, with a visible fee displayed on receipts of purchased sealed beverages. The fees will be applied on June 1, 2023 as follows:

- \$0.01 per aluminum container
- \$0.02 for PET plastic bottles 500 ml and under
- \$0.03 for all other containers

The CBCRA asserts that these new fees will help them fund their Recycle Everywhere campaign, which will promote beverage container recycling province-wide, while installing 250,000 recycling containers in municipal and other public spaces. RPRA recently removed the requirement for producers who plan to implement visible recycling fees to provide rationale through a promotion and education campaign, as to why they are choosing to recover recycling costs in this manner.

Some observers have criticized the CBCRA for passing the cost of their recycling obligations directly on to consumers, in a visible fashion. Visible recycling fees can generate frustration and can potentially undermine support for the transition to full producer responsibility. It is notable that no other producers of various recycling products have stated their intention to charge consumers visible fees to help fund their increased recycling obligations.

AMO recommends that municipal governments be prepared to speak to these new fees, especially considering the fees will be in effect in advance of the actual start of the transition period. In a related note, AMO is also recommending that municipal Councils be prepared to answer questions as to how any post-transition savings will be utilized, once municipalities are not paying for their recycling systems. With the County not transitioning its blue box programme until July 2025, Council will have opportunity well in advance of the transition date to review impacts to the operating budget, and consider options for the best use of the anticipated savings. Since it is expected that there will be significant media coverage of the transition in the lead up to the first communities transitioning on July 1 of this year, this report provides background information for Councillors on some of these upcoming changes.

Recommendation:

That the April 11, 2023 report titled “Blue Box Transition Update” be received for information.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Das Soligo', with a stylized, flowing script.

Das Soligo
Manager of Solid Waste Services