



Stewardship Ontario

## **BACKGROUND - The Blue Box Program**

### **Overview: The Blue Box opportunity**

Recycling has become second nature to the vast majority of Ontarians. In 2013, over 400 communities benefited from residential recycling programs. Thanks to a committed partnership between municipalities, industry and consumers, the province's waste diversion rate for residential printed paper and packaging is the highest in North America.

Despite Ontario's initial success, garbage continues to be a huge problem in our consumer society. Comprehensive recycling programs, such as Ontario's Blue Box system, are critically important to ensure useful materials aren't wasted and that we continue to reduce consumption of raw materials and energy in manufacturing.

### **Facts about the Blue Box Program**

Ontarians have embraced the Blue Box. The now-familiar boxes made their debut in some parts of the province in 1981, originally accepting five types of materials: aluminum containers, glass containers, newsprint, polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic bottles and steel containers. Since then, the program has expanded dramatically.

Here are a few key facts from Stewardship Ontario, the not-for-profit, industry-funded organization that manages the program:

- More than 95 per cent of Ontarians now participate in Blue Box recycling and have access to highly convenient curbside recycling, for hundreds of products in more than a dozen categories.
- The Blue Box Program helps divert a significant amount of waste from our landfills and is one of Ontario's most important recycling programs. In 2013 alone, over 900,000 tonnes of waste was diverted from landfills. That's nine times the total weight of the CN Tower, or enough to fill more than 100,000 transport trucks.
- In 2013, the Blue Box Program diverted 62.8 per cent of printed paper and packaging we consume from landfill. Thanks to the enthusiastic support of municipalities, industry and citizens, Ontario enjoys one of the most convenient and successful recycling programs in the world.

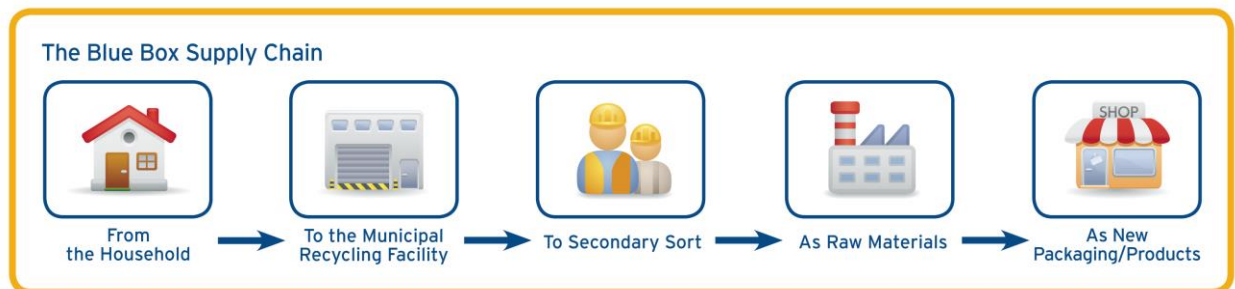
## Funding and administration of the Blue Box Program: A Shared Responsibility

The management and funding of the Blue Box Program – the collecting, transporting and processing of recyclables – is shared between the municipalities that manage local recycling programs and the companies that produce the products that end up in curbside recycling boxes and carts.

**Industry stewards share the municipal cost of operating the Blue Box Program, investing nearly \$100 million (around half the cost) and have contributed over \$768 million towards Blue Box recycling since 2004.**

Fees are set in a transparent, consistent fashion based on a fixed formula determined through discussions between Stewardship Ontario and Waste Diversion Ontario, which is accountable to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment.

As the Blue Box Program continues to grow, the investment from industry stewards also contributes to job creation, new processing technology, expanded service, broader accessibility, and stronger markets for recycled materials.



### For more information:

Alastair Harris-Cartwright  
Communications  
Stewardship Ontario  
416-323-0101 Ext. 184  
[aharris-cartwright@stewardshipontario.ca](mailto:aharris-cartwright@stewardshipontario.ca)  
[www.stewardshipontario.ca](http://www.stewardshipontario.ca)