

Ministry of the Environment  
and Climate Change

Ministère de l'Environnement  
et de l'Action en matière de  
changement climatique



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August 14, 2017

Ms. Glenda Gies  
Chair  
Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority  
4711 Yonge Street, Suite 408  
Toronto ON M2N 6K8

And

Mr. John Coyne  
Chair  
Stewardship Ontario  
1 St. Clair Ave. West, 7th Floor  
Toronto ON M4V 1K6

**Re: First Phase Transition – Direction for Proposal for an Amended Blue Box Program Plan**

Dear Ms. Gies and Mr. Coyne:

Ontario's Blue Box Program is well-recognized as a North American leader that provides services for residential paper products and packaging (PPP).

Pursuant to Section 13 of the *Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2016* (WDTA), I am writing to direct the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority (the Authority) and Stewardship Ontario (SO) to develop a proposal for an amended Blue Box Program Plan (BBPP). This proposal is to be developed collaboratively with municipalities, stewards and affected stakeholders as required by subsection 13(2) of the WDTA.

My expectation is that this proposal will outline the first phase of transition for the Blue Box Program under the WDTA, and will set the stage for a second phase of transition that will result in individual producer responsibility under the *Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016* (RRCEA).

It is also my expectation that the proposal for an amended BBPP will build on the accord outlined in the joint letter sent to my predecessor, Glen Murray, on July 7, 2017 from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, City of Toronto, Regional Public Works Commissioners of Ontario, Municipal Waste Association and SO.

It is in the public interest that the proposal for an amended BBPP is consistent with the following principles:

- Ensuring a seamless transition of the Blue Box Program, specifically:
  - Not negatively affecting Ontarians' experience with and access to Blue Box services,
  - Incorporating clear rules to support residents' participation including standardized materials and services, and
  - Improving program performance;
- Working towards the circular economy by supporting reduction, reuse, recycling and reintegration of PPP materials into the economy;
- Providing for continuous improvement of environmental outcomes by:
  - Expanding and harmonizing the list of materials in the existing Blue Box program that are accepted from Ontario residents,
  - Establishing clear and measurable collection and management standards with a high level of environmental protection, and
  - Developing methods to support waste reduction;
- Providing effective economic methods to incent behavior changes leading to waste reduction of PPP;
- Driving innovation through collaborative and competitive efforts by:
  - Supporting cooperation among parties, including stewards, municipalities, waste management industry, and other affected parties, to bring complementary abilities to deliver better results, and
  - Promoting competition by ensuring a fair and open marketplace for Blue Box services under the WDTA and not creating barriers to competition when the program transitions to individual producer responsibility under the RRCEA;
- Avoiding stranded assets to the extent possible in a collaborative manner;
- Providing choices for municipalities where SO is to provide Blue Box services (i.e. transitioned municipalities):
  - These municipalities will decide whether they wish to act on behalf of SO for the procurement and contract oversight of PPP collection services, and
  - These municipalities should also have an opportunity to participate in the post-collection management of PPP collected; and,
- Addressing issues related to the in-kind contribution from the newspaper industry in a manner that is without cost to the transitioned municipalities.

The Authority and SO shall have regard to the provincial interest described in Section 2 of the RRCEA when developing the proposal for an amended plan.

As producers assume the 50 per cent of costs currently borne by municipal taxpayers, it is my expectation there will be a clear and transparent process by which municipalities demonstrate the benefit their taxpayers will receive.

The Authority and SO shall develop a communication and issues management plan. The plan shall identify issues that may arise during the development of the proposal for the amended BBPP, outline the steps to manage these potential issues and set out the process by which the Authority and SO will provide information to affected stakeholders and the public on a regular basis.

During the development of the proposal for an amended plan, the Authority and SO shall ensure meaningful consultation and communication with representatives of municipalities, stewards and other affected stakeholders.

Together with the submission of the proposal for an amended BBPP, the Authority and SO shall submit a report to the Ministry outlining how the Authority and SO have met the consultation requirements under the WDTA, including:

- A list of the stewards, municipalities, service providers and other affected stakeholders that were consulted during the development of the proposal;
- A summary of the comments received by the Authority and SO from affected stakeholders; and,
- A report of how the comments were considered by the Authority and SO.

The Authority and SO shall report to the Ministry each month on their progress in developing the proposal for an amended BBPP.

An addendum to this letter has been attached which provides additional direction for amending the BBPP.

The proposal for an amended BBPP shall be developed in accordance with this letter and the enclosed addendum and the WDTA.

If approved by the Authority, the proposal for an amended BBPP shall be submitted to me for approval by February 15, 2018, or on such later date that I provide in writing. The submission shall include particulars of any matters that are unresolved at the time of the submission.

It is my expectation that, upon my approval, and subject to any necessary amendments to relevant regulations being approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, this amended plan will replace the current plan in its entirety.

Ms. Glenda Gies  
Mr. John Coyne  
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If it is in the public interest to do so, I will provide further direction at a later date related to the matters set out in this requirement, or to provide clarification related to amending the BBPP.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ballard". The signature is written over the printed name and title.

Chris Ballard  
Minister

Cc: Paul Evans, Deputy Minister  
Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change

## **ADDENDUM TO THE MINISTER'S DIRECTION LETTER FOR AN AMENDED BLUE BOX PROGRAM PLAN**

Pursuant to an agreement being reached between SO and each transitioned municipality (see definition below) and subject to necessary amendments to relevant regulations being made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, SO would provide services for residential paper products and packaging (PPP) supplied by stewards to Ontario residents and covered under the Blue Box Program.

### **NON-TRANSITIONED MUNICIPALITIES:**

Non-transitioned municipalities are those that have not entered into an agreement with SO and SO is not delivering Blue Box collection and management services for these municipalities.

The proposal for an amended BBPP shall address payments to the non-transitioned municipalities under Section 11 of the WDTA based on the municipality's verified net cost of operating its existing Blue Box program:

- The plan shall define the eligible costs to be included in calculating the net cost; and,
- The plan shall also describe any agreements among the Authority, SO, and recipient municipalities for the reporting and verification of costs by municipalities.

### **TRANSITIONED MUNICIPALITIES:**

Subject to necessary amendments to relevant regulations being approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, transitioned municipalities are those that have entered into an agreement with SO and SO is delivering Blue Box collection and management services.

The proposal shall outline when and how the responsibility for the collection and management of PPP will be transferred smoothly from these municipalities to SO.

The proposal for an amended BBPP shall include the following:

#### ***Defined Materials Covered in BBPP:***

- Include an expanded definition of Blue Box materials to identify the PPP that will be covered under the BBPP;
- The materials shall include:
  - paper products,
  - primary packaging,
  - convenience packaging, and
  - transport packaging;
- For purposes of primary, convenience and transport packaging, refer to the RRCEA for definitions; and,

- When defining the materials, SO and the Authority will also consult with stewards of packaging who are regulated under deposit-return programs (e.g., stewards of milk containers).

***Defined Stewards:***

- Define obligated stewards.

***Defined Responsibility for Waste Reduction and Resource Recovery:***

*Waste Reduction*

The proposal for an amended BBPP shall:

- Establish methods to facilitate the reduction of waste generated related to defined PPP materials. The methods may include activities to support:
  - increase of the product's or packaging's reusability and recyclability,
  - reduction or elimination of any impact the material may have on the recyclability of other materials,
  - reduction of the amount of waste generated at the end of the product's or packaging's life,
  - reduction or elimination of the use of any substance in the material that compromises the material's reusability or recyclability, and/or
  - increase of the use of recovered resources in the making of the material;
- Use means to discourage the use of materials that are difficult to recycle and have low recovery rates. The means include, but are not limited to, rules for stewards, fee setting methodology, and compiling information to measure stewards' initiatives to reduce waste; and,
- Establish mechanisms to identify and address issues associated with problematic materials, such as packaging that is difficult to recycle.

*Collection and Management of Materials*

The proposal shall set clear standards for SO's collection and management, including:

- Support clear service standards to enable resident participation;
- Increase the diversion target for the Blue Box Program to 75 per cent of the PPP supplied by stewards to transitioned municipalities' households;
- Establish material-specific management targets for PPP supplied by stewards to transitioned municipalities' households;
- Identify geographically-based collection and management standards, including rural, northern, and remote areas;
- Maintain convenience and accessibility standards, including:
  - curbside collection for households where currently provided by these municipalities and indigenous communities,
  - collection services to multi-residential buildings where currently provided by these municipalities and indigenous communities, and
  - depot collection services currently provided by these municipalities and indigenous communities;
- Improve convenience and accessibility by offering collection services to multi-residential buildings that are not being serviced by these municipalities, within an identified timeframe;

- Consider accommodating associated public spaces, parks and other related services provided by these municipalities;
- Consider expanding Blue Box collection services over time; and,
- The methods for managing the materials shall allow for the material or part of the material to be, in accordance with Ontario standards and regulations:
  - reused,
  - used in the making of new products, packaging or other activities in end-markets, or
  - used as a nutrient for improving the quality of soil, agriculture or landscaping.

### Promotion and Education

For the purpose of increasing resource recovery and reducing Blue Box waste materials, the proposal shall establish an effective promotion and education program, including promoting awareness of the program activities to residents and other targeted audiences and engaging audiences to elicit feedback.

### Registration, Reporting, Record Keeping and Auditing

The proposal will include an appropriate approach for registration, reporting, record keeping and a third-party audit to ensure an effective and efficient system.

### **ESTABLISH ISSUE MANAGEMENT APPROACHES:**

The proposal shall:

- Develop a protocol for managing issues raised in a fair, effective, efficient and equitable manner during the implementation of the amended plan, if approved;
- Develop a plan to avoid stranded assets to the extent possible in a collaborative manner; and,
- Establish an arrangement between SO and the newspaper industry (i.e., the Canadian Newspapers Association and Ontario Community Newspapers Association) in order to meet members' obligation for old newsprint in such a manner that is without cost to transitioned municipalities.

### **PROMOTE COMPETITION:**

The proposal shall:

- Establish a mechanism to support a fair and open marketplace for Blue Box services under the WDTA;
- Not create barriers to competition in the second phase of transition that will result in individual producer responsibility under the RRCEA; and,
- Describe how contracts held by SO for the collection and management of PPP will be managed upon wind up of the Blue Box Program to enable competition once materials are regulated under the RRCEA.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND REPORTING:

- The proposal shall include performance indicators to measure whether SO has fulfilled the resource recovery obligations and established waste reduction methods as set out in the amended plan; and,
- In addition to the requirements set out in Section 30 of the WDTA, SO's Annual Report shall include:
  - a description of whether and how SO has fulfilled resource recovery obligations set in the amended plan,
  - a description of how SO has supported waste reduction methods set in the amended plan, and
  - a third-party audit of SO's collection and management services and outcomes.