

PUBLIC CONSULTATION
for the
PROPOSED BLUE BOX WASTE DIVERSION
PROGRAM PLAN

FINAL REPORT

Submitted to:
Stewardship Ontario

Submitted by:



The Recycling Council of Ontario

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Backgrounder

As part of the requirement of the development of the Blue Box Waste Diversion Program, Stewardship Ontario was required to conduct three separate consultations; consultations with affected businesses and industry sectors; consultations with Ontario municipalities and a public consultation as part of the Blue Box Waste Diversion Program Plan development. The results of the municipal consultation (led by AMO – Association of Municipalities of Ontario) can be found on their website at www.amo.on.ca. The results of the industry consultation process are summarized in Stewardship Ontario's Blue Box Program plan that was presented to Waste Diversion Ontario, WDO. This Plan can be found on Stewardship Ontario's website at www.stewardshipontario.ca.

For the public consultation program component, Stewardship Ontario contracted the Recycling Council of Ontario to manage and deliver this consultation. The Recycling Council of Ontario sub-contracted ESG International (from Guelph, Ontario) to support the development and delivery of the consultation process. The objective of this consultation was to provide an opportunity for people from across Ontario to contribute their ideas and opinions to the Proposed Blue Box Waste Diversion Program Plan.

Terms of reference, RCO's proposal and Stewardship Ontario letter of award for this consultation can be found in Appendix I.

A Public Consultation Steering Committee was struck, comprised of representatives from Stewardship Ontario, the Association of Municipalities, Waste Diversion Ontario and RCO. Meeting for the first time on November 21, 2002, this Public Consultation Steering Committee oversaw the process – i.e. supporting the development of the background information package, reviewing the invitation and advertising, overseeing the consultation process, evaluating each session and recommending improvements throughout.

To ensure that comments provided by the public were considered during the writing of Proposed Blue Box Waste Diversion Program Plan, all consultations were completed by January 15, 2003. This tight timeline, coupled with the difficulty of meeting with the public over the holiday season, made completing a thorough consultation a challenge.

The Steering Committee approached their target audience for this project in two groups. The engaged group was identified as those members of the public that were recognized by RCO, to be already involved in waste and/or other environmental issues. This sector was identified through RCO's partnering networks and was invited to participate through direct email notification. The second group, considered the general public, were notified and invited by less direct methods. Although invitations were sent with this in mind, all public was welcomed and encouraged to participate in all parts of the consultation. In December, RCO sent out formal invitations through its membership and organizational networks as well as through its partnering associations and industries, prioritizing participation to the "engaged" public. In January, RCO advertised in local newspaper media through the Ontario Community Newspaper Association spreading the notification and invitation throughout the general public. At all times the schedule of the consultation and opportunity to comment was available on the RCO and Stewardship Ontario websites.

Public Consultation Schedule

In total, six consultation sessions were held. The dates, times and locations of these sessions are detailed in the table below:

Public Consultation Sessions		
Date	Time	Location
Dec. 12, 2002	1 – 4:30 pm Workshop (Engaged Public)	Toronto
Jan. 6, 2003	7 – 9:30 pm Workshop (Engaged Public)	Guelph
Jan. 7, 2003	3 – 7 pm Open House 7 – 9:30 pm Workshop	Thunder Bay
Jan. 9, 2003	3 – 7 pm Open House 7 – 9:30 pm Workshop	North York
Jan. 11, 2003	3 – 7 pm Open House 7 – 9:30 pm Workshop	London
Jan. 13, 2003	3 – 7 pm Open House 7 – 9:30 pm Workshop	Kingston

The locations of each of the sessions were chosen to provide an opportunity for the public in each region of Ontario to attend.

Public Consultation Elements

The Steering Committee recommended that the public consultation sessions be focused on, but not limited to, specific elements of the Proposed Blue Box Waste Diversion Program Plan. Initially these were:

- 1. Targets/Performance Indicators**
- 2. Municipal Funding Allocation Model, Promoting Increased Diversion & System Efficiency**
- 3. Recycling Effectiveness and Efficiency Fund**
- 4. Education and Public Awareness Program for Blue Box**

Although consultation information and discussions were focused on these four elements of the Proposed Blue Box Waste Diversion Program Plan, the consultation team encouraged and welcomed comments on ANY aspects of the Proposed Blue Box Waste Diversion Program Plan.

Background Information Document

After examining the initial responses to the invitation to comment, it was apparent that the public did not have sufficient background information on the Proposed Blue Box Waste Diversion Plan to participate fully in the consultation workshops.

In response, RCO prepared a background information document that summarized the most current information on the four elements of the plan that were of focus, as they were being developed for inclusion in the Plan. In addition to details on these four elements of the plan, the background information document provided some basic information on The Waste Diversion Act, Waste Diversion Ontario, and the Program Request letter from the Minister to the WDO for a

Blue Box Waste Diversion Program. RCO provided other reference materials and referred the interested public to Stewardship Ontario's and Ministry of Ontario of the Environment's websites where more detailed information could be found.

All information and background materials were provided to the public through RCO and Stewardship Ontario Websites as well as distributed to each of the participants as they registered for the consultation sessions. Hard copies of this documentation were also provided to any of the public that choose to drop into the open houses and upon request through RCO's office.

Copies of the Background Information Document can be found Appendix II.

Stakeholder Workshops/Open House

To deliver the consultations, ESG International used a combination of small group workshops and open house sessions. Of the total six sessions held, the first two consultations offered group workshops (Toronto, Guelph). The remaining four offered both Open Houses and group workshops (North York, London, Thunder Bay and Kingston). The open house sessions were planned with a drop-in atmosphere, where background information was distributed and informal discussions were held. The workshop sessions used a problem-based learning model for small group discussion and feedback, together with a short presentation on the program. Using a workbook, participants discussed specific elements of the Proposed Blue Box Waste Diversion Program Plan through a series of questions. Participants were divided into small groups. Each group selected a recorder and chair and held open discussions. The recorder documented all comments as they were offered. Groups had approximately 20 minutes to discuss each workbook question. Once all the comments were recorded, the chair was asked to provide a summary of the key points from each discussion back to the full audience at the workshop.

The Steering Committee agreed to use the first consultation session held in Toronto, as a pilot. This pilot session provided useful feedback on the consultation process including the background information package and workbook. Following this session, the Steering Committee agreed to make alterations to the consultation process based on evaluations of the following:

1. Response to the invitation
2. Response to the background information document
3. Response to the content and style of the workbook
4. Appropriateness of the location and venue
5. Response to the overall consultation process

The decision to make the first session in Toronto a pilot, proved to be very valuable. Several recommended changes were implemented in the delivery for the remaining consultation sessions. The most significant of these, were the inclusion of a background presentation and the simplification of the workbook. As the notification for first session was very short, participants did not have much time to preview the background information document. The short notice, coupled with a workbook that required some background knowledge of the plan, made it very difficult for participants to gain a clear and full understanding of the details and provide comment.

Following this initial reaction, RCO created a short power point presentation which summarized the details of the background information documents. This presentation was used to open each of the remaining consultation sessions as a live preview of the proposed plan. At the Open Houses, slides were used as a scrolling presentation which guests could view at their leisure. The verbal presentation of the background document proved invaluable for the remainder of the sessions.

Participants were able to gain a better understanding of the Plan and were then ready to provide more informed comment on the focused issues during the group work.

To further ensure the effectiveness of the consultation time, RCO also revised the workbook by precluding each question with a short explanation of each of the main topics of discussions as related to the Proposed Blue Box Waste Diversion Plan. In addition, each of the questions was simplified to ensure participants would have a clearer understanding of what they were being asked to comment on. The final version of workbook questions focused on the following topic areas;

1. Targets – Recycling Efficiency Rate
2. Effectiveness and Efficiency Fund/Municipal Program Improvements
3. Public Awareness and Education

For the remainder of the consultation process, participants were provided with a background information package that detailed the focused elements in the plan in four subject headings. These subject headings were used to develop three key questions that were used in the participant workbook.

A copy of the workbook can be found in Appendix III.

Thunder Bay Consultation

At the participant's request, the public consultation session in Thunder Bay was delivered much differently than any other session. The day was divided into two parts: a public Open House during the afternoon, and a facilitated discussion in the evening. During the afternoon Open House, several participants agreed to sit down in an informal focus group to review the unique blue box experiences in Northwestern Ontario, and provide recommendations to improve waste diversion. During the evening discussion, given the number of municipal government participants (both staff and elected officials), emphasis was placed on the Blue Box Program's municipal funding allocation model.

A copy of the Thunder Bay interim report can be found in Appendix IV

Invitation and Notification

The invitations for the consultation sessions were distributed in two ways. Invitations were initially targeted to the engaged sector and then notification was directed to the general public. RCO utilized its directory of membership as well as its network with other associations and organizations to invite the engaged stakeholders. Using email notification, over 5800 individuals, associations and organizations were notified and invited to either attend or provide comment.

Notices were also sent to the city clerk at each of the host municipalities for inclusion in the council agenda. RCO requested that these notices be placed on public bulletin boards and/or city websites.

In addition daily newspapers were sent media releases for inclusion in community calendars.

A copy of the invitation and the distribution list can be found in Appendix V.

In addition to direct email and fax notification, advertisements were purchased through the Ontario Community Newspaper Association in several community newspapers in Ontario. A ¼

page announcement was run in newspapers in the area of Guelph, Thunder Bay, North York and London, prior to the public open houses and stakeholder workshops. This newspaper advertisement included the details of each of the consultation sessions as well as a response form that members of the public could fax or mail to RCO, together with instructions for submitting comments through the RCO website or by email.

A copy of the sample Newspaper Ad can be found in Appendix VI

Radio Media Coverage

In addition to purchased ads, RCO arranged the CBC Noon Radio live call-in show to host a discussion on the Proposed Blue Box Waste Diversion Plan. Airing on Jan. 8, 2003 at 1 pm, the show began with an open conversation with Tim Moore, Chair of Waste Diversion Ontario and the host. The opening discussions also included a phone in appearance of Terry Cassidy, representing the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. After a brief opening, the general public was encouraged to call in to provide comment about the Proposed Plan.

Although RCO was unable quantify the numbers of public that participated in the call-in show, the numbers of callers that did participate demonstrated a strong public interest regarding recycling and other environmental issues. Callers were eager to ask questions and provide comment, but their responses were not solely specific to the Proposed Blue Box Waste Diversion Program Plan.

Listeners and callers of the CBC noon call-in radio show were directed to Stewardship Ontario website to retrieve information or to provide comment. The following web report provided by Stewardship Ontario, details the traffic to their website during the week of Jan. 6 - 10. It clearly demonstrates an increase in visitors and visits on the day of the radio spot.

Date	Visits	Accesses
Jan. 6	366	6639
Jan. 7	279	5053
Jan. 8 (date of the CBC Noon Call-In show)	469	10,337
Jan. 9	282	6209
Jan. 10	478	9276

Note: Accesses is defined as the total number of pages viewed by visitors

On-Line Communications

In addition to email notification, the public was invited on all notices and advertisements to visit RCO and Stewardship Ontario's websites. Stewardship Ontario posted a direct

link to the RCO website during the consultation period. RCO posted all of the background documents, offered on-line registration form for workshops and redirected visitors who wanted more details on the program to Stewardship Ontario or the Ontario Ministry of the Environment websites. The deadline for public comment to the RCO on the proposed Blue Box Waste Diversion Program Plan was Jan. 17, 2003. Any public inquiries or comments provided after Jan. 17, 2003 were directed to Stewardship Ontario. All comments will be received by Stewardship Ontario until Feb. 15, at which time the plan will be formally submitted to WDO. Following Feb. 15, the RCO and Stewardship Ontario websites will direct comments to the Ministry of the Environment's Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) website where it is expected the final Blue box Program Plan will be posted throughout March 2003.

Public Response

Attendance at the Consultation Workshops

Consultation Date	Registered	Actually Attended
Dec. 12 (Toronto)	15	15
Jan. 6 (Guelph)	11	18
Jan. 7 (Thunder Bay)	6	14
Jan. 9 (North York)	19	20
Jan. 11 (London)	12	13
Jan. 13 (Kingston)	18	26
Total	81	106

Website Traffic Dec. /02 – Jan.17/03

Unique visits to RCO's website (number of NEW visitors to the site between Dec. /02 and Jan. 17/03)	10499
Visits (total number of visits to the site during Dec. /02 and Jan. 17/03)	18922
Visits/Visitor (the average individual visited 1.8 times daily during Dec. /02 and Jan. 17/03)	1.8
Registration Page	179
Consultation Invitation Page	670
Background Documents	221
Summary of the Dec. 12th Consultation	180

Other Responses

Email	24
Fax	5
Post	11
Total Other Responses	40

- note these responses come from public that did not attend the consultation sessions

Copies of the email, fax and Post Public Responses can be found in Appendix VII

Recording and Evaluations

At each consultation session and during the Open House, public comments were recorded. These comments were included in the interim reports for each of the six sessions that were developed. Participants at each workshop were notified during the sessions that these reports would be posted on RCO’s website as soon as they were available. During the general discussions at the Open House sessions, ESG and members of the Steering Committee recorded public comments as they were offered. These comments were also included in each of the session interim reports.

Copies of the Interim Session Reports and evaluation reports for each of the consultation sessions can be found in Appendix VIII

In addition to gathering comments on the proposed Blue Box Waste Diversion Program, each participant of the workshops was provided with an evaluation forms. These evaluation forms provided feedback on the consultation venue, timing, process and delivery and were tabulated after each individual session.

Public Comment

Public comments were gathered and recorded through a variety of ways throughout the consultations process.

- A. Interim reports were submitted following each group workshop and included written comments and discussions provided by participants on each of the hand-in sheets
- B. ESG International and other members of the Steering Committee recorded points of discussions at each of the Open House sessions
- C. All fax, mail-in and email responses and comments were compiled and recorded

For the purposes of this report RCO has attempted to compile the most common public comments in each of the focused, topic areas with the Proposed Blue Box Waste Diversion Plan consultation process. The following document responses do not include every comment provide but rather summarize those which were most common. These comments have been recorded below separated under each of their respective topic areas.

Common Public Reponses

Topic # 1

The goal of the Blue Box Waste Diversion Program is to increase the diversion of municipal Blue box materials from waste. In order to measure whether the program is achieving this goal, Stewardship Ontario has been asked by the Minister of the Environment to identify ways to measure its success. The measurement that is being proposed is recycling efficiency rate. This recycling efficiency rate will measure the volume and weight of recyclables that are diverted from household garbage into the blue box as a result of the program.

In your view, will this rate, and the related waste audit measures, enable the program to meet its goal?

A) Why or why not?

- Consistent standard programs are needed across the province
- Targets should be set higher, more lofty
- Targets/Assessments need to include multi-unit residential apartments buildings
- Targets should be based on what's generated not on what's recycled. Does this target in any way recognize and reward reduction?
- Enforcement is needed to ensure targets are met
- Incentives should be put in place to reduce garbage and decrease packaging
- It is vital that markets for materials are established
- Concern that this target provides feedback to the manufacturer or packager to choose a recyclable package.
- Ensure audits are consistent, standardized and take into account geographic differences (e.g. Seasonal communities, will audits be taken on the same households, will audits be taken at the same of the year)
- Garbage measurements should be reported as well as recycling capture rates
- Focus on existing blue box materials – add other products/materials in future years

B) Are there other performance measures that you feel should be used?

- Deposit return systems should be considered and encouraged
- Conduct product life cycles analysis-energy costs, etc.
- Kilograms per household should be captured for diversion
- Add incentives
- Costs to increase diversion, monitor costs to justify additional collectibles
- Full cost accounting in tipping fees
- Create standards for packaging

Topic # 2

Through the Blue Box Waste Diversion Program, obligated companies will pay 50% of the net costs of residential recycling. One key objective for this funding is to improve municipal Blue

Box programs in Ontario. Funds will be allocated to municipalities based on the efficiency of the Blue Box program (efficiency will be determined by the range, weight and volume of material they collected and marketed, with adjustments for program size and population density).

- a) What can you and your community do to improve the performance of the Blue Box program in your community?
- Include multi –unit buildings in their program
 - Create incentives for participation, including user pay for waste collection/disposal
 - Create an Award program for individual and communities
 - Improve public space Recycling
 - Use clear garbage bags so contents can be easily checked
 - Improve education and communications
 - Provide networking opportunities for municipalities to share information and best practices.
 - Provide bonuses for those municipalities who reduce waste
 - Enforce By Laws, strict enforcement
 - Inform communities of the potential savings brought on by an efficient recycling program
 - Complete curb side waste audits
 - Publish community diversion report cards

Obligated companies will set aside 10% of the 50% funding that they will pay toward Blue Box programs in Ontario in an Efficiency and Effectiveness Fund. Municipalities will apply to this fund for special projects to help them improve their Blue Box program.

- b) What type of projects should this fund invest in?
- Promotional literature
 - Provide literature in a variety of languages
 - Educational programs
 - Interpretive centres on Recycling
 - Building and Equipment Capital
 - Reuse Centres
 - Research into design for in-home “recycling” effectiveness
 - Develop markets for materials
 - Research new technologies and local business opportunities
 - Invest in community based groups
 - Add waste reduction information to school curriculums

Topic #3

The Waste Diversion Act focuses on the importance of public awareness and education. The proposed education and public awareness program for Blue Box Waste Diversion includes an annual \$1.3 million contribution of newspaper advertising from the Canadian Newspaper Association and the Ontario Community Newspaper Association.

In addition to this newspaper advertising can you suggest other education and public awareness initiatives that would help to increase the diversion of the recyclables from household waste?

- Inform the public on what products/packaging are truly recyclable
- Create an award program to reward success stories
- Radio and TV Advertisements

- Mandatory education programs in schools
- Create a “green pages” in the telephone book
- Place ads on trucks
- Programs to support Supermarkets to advertise what is recyclable in stores
- Insert information in regular household correspondence (hydro bills, tax bills, etc.)
- Newsletters
- Target youth with promotional materials/methods
- Advertisements on bus shelters
- Create a simple standard message (generic)
- Promote recycling through competitiveness (community vs. community)
- Quantify and advertise how recycling saves communities money
- Education and Engage local politicians
- Create a good website
- Create multi lingual promotional/informational materials
- Point of purchase education

Future Consultations

When the final version of the Proposed Blue Box Waste Diversion Program Plan is submitted to the Minister for approval (Feb. 28, 2003), RCO and Stewardship Ontario will post the final plan on their respective websites. A joint letter will be electronically to all of the participants of the consultation to make them aware that the Plan has been completed and submitted to the minister. This notification will highlight areas of the Plan that incorporated input made by the public during consultations. The public will be encouraged to provide further comment on the plan through the EBR process, or directly to RCO or Stewardship Ontario. All public will be advised to contact RCO or Stewardship Ontario should they seek more information or have specific questions.