



June 7, 2019

Dear Mr. Lindsay,

I would like to express my appreciation to you for agreeing to volunteer to help the people of Ontario and their government tackle the serious problem of plastic pollution, a key commitment in the Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan.

Ontario families take pride in doing their part for the environment. Ontarians are leaders in Canada in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and our own city of Kitchener was the birthplace of the world's first Blue Box program. Knowing this, I was disappointed to learn that, while Ontario families do their part by diligently sorting their recycling, government and industry are failing them.

Today, Ontario's recycling rates have been stalled for 15 years and up to 30% of what is put into blue boxes is sent to landfill. Some of Ontario's plastic litter and waste is being shipped across the ocean to the Philippines and Malaysia. Meanwhile, plastic and other litter is increasingly plaguing our parks, highways, rivers and lakes.

This is unacceptable—both industry and government must do better.

It is for these reasons that I look forward to you providing me with advice on how to improve recycling through the Blue Box Program and better manage plastic pollution.

In addition, I ask that your work be guided by the following public policy objectives:

- Standardization across the province of what can be recycled in offices, parks, public spaces and homes;
- Improve diversion rates and increase what materials can be recycled;
- Reduce litter and waste in communities and parks;
- Improve Ontario's Blue Box program by requiring producers to pay for the recycling of the products they produce, through achieving producer responsibility; and
- Maintain or improve frequency of Blue Box collection.
- When increasing diversion in the residential sector, consider how these policies can also enable diversion in the institutional, commercial and industrial sector.

Your work will consist of two roles: a mediation role where you, as an impartial mediator, will foster discussion and help producers, municipalities and other stakeholders to move closer to or reach agreement on key issues; and an advisory role, where you will provide me with advice on how these issues may be best addressed to ensure Ontario's recycling system is more consistent, reliable and cost-effective for Ontarians.

To assist you in this work, I have also requested a jurisdictional review on how leading jurisdictions are employing innovative technologies to improve recycling efficiency and diversion rates for you to consider.

The current Blue Box Program has been in place since the 1980s and had great early, world-renowned success in recovering residential printed paper and packaging for recycling. In recent years, however, waste diversion rates have stalled in Ontario and been surpassed in other provinces. Meanwhile the costs to operate the program are rising.

While many countries used to take our recycled material, they are increasingly shutting their doors. In 2018, China launched "National Sword", a policy which bans the importation of many recycled plastics and other materials – including from Ontario. This has resulted in increased recycling costs, increased material being sent to landfill, and more plastic litter and waste in our communities.

Mandating producer responsibility will allow for a province-wide obligation for producers to pay for and manage their materials. It will also allow for a single common list of what can be recycled across the province. This system is a cost-effective and accountable way to promote innovation and to make sure that Ontarians' efforts to recycle are more effective, resulting in increased recycling and diversion rates.

At the conclusion of your work, please provide me with a report that outlines where the parties reached agreement and your recommendation on how to address any outstanding issues by July 20, 2019.

Thank you again for volunteering your time to help government and industry live up to the expectations of Ontarians when it comes to plastic pollution and recycling.

Regards,



Rod Phillips
Minister