

Ontario To Tackle Plastic Litter and Waste & Revamp Recycling*Government Appoints Special Advisor on Recycling and Plastic Waste*

June 7, 2019 11:00 A.M.

TORONTO — Ontario is protecting what matters most by tackling the serious problem of plastic pollution and litter that is increasingly plaguing our parks, highways, lakes and rivers.

Ontario has engaged [David Lindsay](#) as a Special Advisor on Recycling and Plastic Waste to urgently address these issues. Mr. Lindsay will provide Rod Phillips, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, a report this summer on how to tackle plastic waste and litter, improve recycling, increase products that can go into the blue box, and ensure producers are responsible for managing plastic and other packaging at end-of-life.

"Ontario families take pride in doing their part for the environment. In fact, our own city of Kitchener was the birthplace of the world's first Blue Box program," said Minister Phillips. "Knowing this, I was disappointed to learn that, while Ontario families work to sort and recycle properly, government and industry are failing them. Ontario's recycling rates have been stalled for 15 years and up to 30 per cent of what is put into blue boxes is sent to landfill. Not to mention, recent stories highlight how some of Ontario's plastic waste is being unsustainably shipped across the ocean to the Philippines and Malaysia."

Mr. Lindsay currently serves as President and CEO of the Council of Ontario Universities. Prior to this, he was President and CEO of the Forest Products Association of Canada and of Colleges Ontario, an advocacy organization for the province's 24 colleges of applied arts and technology. Mr. Lindsay also served Ontarians as a former Deputy Minister for several Ontario ministries over the course of six years, including Natural Resources and Northern Development, Mines and Forestry.

"I'm looking forward to helping Ontario's municipalities and producers work together to address plastic litter and improve recycling in our province," said David Lindsay. "Having stakeholders come together to identify concerns and find solutions will be integral to reinvigorating the province's Blue Box Program and solving the problem of plastic litter and waste."

In the Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan, Ontario committed to transitioning the costs of the Blue Box Program away from municipal taxpayers to make the producers of products and

packaging fully responsible. Shifting to producer responsibility will obligate producers across the province to pay for and manage their materials. It will also enable the common list of what can be recycled across the province. This is a cost-effective and accountable way to promote innovation and ensure Ontarians' recycling efforts are more effective, resulting in increased recycling and diversion rates.

Reducing plastic waste and litter and making producers responsible for the end-of-life management of their products is a key part of our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan to balance a healthy economy and a healthy environment and keep our province clean and beautiful for current and future generations.

QUICK FACTS

- In the open-facing letter to the Special Advisor, the Minister has requested that 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;
 - Maintain or improve frequency of Blue Box collection; and
 - When increasing diversion in the residential sector, consider how these policies can also enable diversion in the institutional, commercial and industrial sector.
- The current Blue Box Program has been in place since the 1980s and had world-renowned success in recovering residential printed paper and packaging for recycling. However, Ontario's waste diversion rates have stalled at just over 60 per cent for the past 15 years.
- Blue Box costs are expected to increase by approximately \$10 million per year after 2019.
- Based on 2017 costs, municipalities would save about \$125 - \$175 million annually once full producer responsibility for the Blue Box Program is put in place.
- It is estimated that almost 10,000 tonnes of plastic debris enter the Great Lakes each year.
- Ontario posted a discussion paper: [Reducing Litter and Waste in Our Communities](#) on the Environmental Registry from March 6 to April 20, 2019 and received close to 18,000 comments, which are currently being reviewed to inform next steps.

LEARN MORE

- Read the [Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan](#)
- Read the [Waste Discussion Paper](#)

