

NEWS RELEASE

Ontario Enhancing Blue Box Program

Province bringing recycling to more communities and expanding list of blue bin items

June 03, 2021

[Environment, Conservation and Parks](#)

TORONTO — Following extensive consultations, the Ontario government is improving blue box recycling by expanding service to more communities, standardizing the list of materials that can be recycled across the province and saving municipalities money by making producers of products and packaging fully responsible for the cost and operation of the program.

“Producers and municipalities have been advocating for an enhanced, producer-led Blue Box program for over a decade and I’m proud that our government has finalized these improvements,” said Jeff Yurek, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. “Our goal is to ensure our program remains convenient, affordable and right for communities. That’s why we are creating a stronger and more effective blue box service that will have some of the highest waste diversion targets in North America to promote greater innovations in recycling technologies and increased use of recycled materials.”

The enhanced Blue Box program will make recycling easier for Ontarians by:

- Expanding collection to all communities outside the Far North by 2026;
- Standardizing what can be recycled across Ontario;
- Accepting common single-use and packaging-like products such as paper and plastic cups, foils, trays, bags and boxes sold for home use;
- Collecting single-use items that are distributed or sold to consume food and beverage products, like stir sticks, straws, cutlery and plates;
- Expanding services to more facilities such as apartment buildings, municipally run or non-profit long-term care homes and retirement homes, and schools.

The province is also expanding collection to more parks, playgrounds, and transit stations, more than tripling the number of public space recycling bins funded under the current program so there are more opportunities to recycle at home and on the go.

The changes to the program will also transition the costs of the Blue Box program away from municipal taxpayers by making the producers of products and packaging fully responsible for managing the life-cycle of their products, resulting in an estimated savings of \$156 million annually for municipalities.

“Our government is supporting the people of Ontario by moving accountability for recycling costs away from the taxpayer,” said Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. “We are proud to support these changes that will help divert waste and protect our environment while putting money back in the pockets of people who live and work in this province.”

Combining 253 local programs into a single provincial collection system managed by producers will improve recycling operations across the province, encouraging producers to find efficiencies that will make recycling simpler and easier for residents, while also driving innovation in recycling practices and technologies by rewarding producers who make their products easier to recycle and can derive more value from waste – fueling job creation and attracting investment right here in Ontario.

The transition to the enhanced Blue Box program will be staggered from 2023 to 2025 to ensure a smooth transition for municipalities and producers, so there is no interruption to service for residents. Some of the first municipalities scheduled to adopt the new producer model include Kenora, London, Toronto and the Town of Hawkesbury.

Reducing plastic waste and litter and making producers responsible for managing waste from packaging or their products is a key part of the [Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan](#). Ontario remains committed to balancing a healthy economy with a healthy environment and keeping Ontario clean and beautiful.

Quick Facts

- Ontario's overall waste diversion rate has stalled and about 70 per cent of our waste materials continue to end up in landfills.
- The transition of municipalities to the new Blue Box program will be staggered to ensure stable transition for communities and balance costs and facilitate economies of scale for producers. The rollout schedule can be found [here](#).
- Ontarians will not see any disruption in their blue box services. Communities already participating in curbside blue box collection will continue to receive the service as they transition to the new producer-run model, including those with populations under 5,000.
- This new framework ensures programs already having a positive impact on the environment, like the Beer Store's deposit return program, can continue under the new producer responsibility model.

Quotes

"These changes to the Blue Box program reflect the most important advances in waste diversion since the program was created two decades ago. It will save property taxpayers \$150 million a year and lead to better, more innovative and sustainable packaging practices."

- Graydon Smith
President of Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO)

"The Ontario Waste Management Association (OWMA) supports the Ontario government's commitment to strengthen the Blue Box program and set some of the highest waste diversion targets in North America. This program will better allow producers to effectively and accountably promote waste diversion, better manage the handling of 800,000 tonnes of products and packaging at the end-of-life stage and reduce the burden on municipal taxpayers. These changes are not only good for the environment, they are good for the economy, and will encourage investment."

- Mike Chopowick
OWMA Chief Executive Officer

"GFL Environmental Inc. commends the Ford Government on its initiative to seize the recycling opportunity in Ontario. Our signature bright green fleet of trucks and five recycling facilities located throughout the province are able to support a significant portion of Ontario's current residential recycling needs. Together with industry, we are proud to build on the successes of Ontario's municipalities and step up to the plate to ensure that when Ontario families set their blue box at the curb, they can be confident that GFL remains committed to advancing the province's goals."

- Patrick Dovigi
Founder and CEO of GFL

"The Canadian Beverage Association (CBA) supports the modernization of the province's blue box recycling system and the introduction of ambitious targets to increase the recycling of beverage containers. The blue box regulation will improve curbside recycling throughout Ontario while allowing our sector to build an accessible, complementary recycling program to collect beverage containers in public spaces. The net result will be a stronger, more robust circular economy for beverage containers."

- Jim Goetz
President, CBA

"Keurig Dr Pepper Canada applauds the Ontario Government's policy to expand and improve the recycling system in the province. By including items like recyclable coffee pods, Ontario's blue box program will ensure more waste is diverted from the landfills and made part of the circular economy. Our company is committed to reducing packaging waste by focusing on innovative design, increased recovery and use of recycled materials. We look forward to working with municipalities across the province to build a more sustainable Ontario for years to come."

- Stephane Glorieux
President, Keurig Dr Pepper Canada

Additional Resources

- [Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan](#)
- [Waste management in Ontario](#)
- [Waste Discussion Paper](#)
- [Municipal Roll Out Schedule/Calendar](#)

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