



MEMBER REQUEST FOR DECISION SPRING 2018 MUNICIPAL LEADERS' CAUCUS

DATE:

March 15, 2018

TOPIC:

Amendments Required for Provincial Recycling Regulations

RECOMMENDATION:

The Council from Strathcona County requests that the AUMA Board advocate the Province of Alberta to make the proposed changes as outlined under the 2013 Proposed Designated Materials Recycling Regulation.

BACKGROUND:

The Province of Alberta has a number of successful recycling stewardship programs, which include: the beverage container recycling program (1972), hazardous waste legislation (1985), the tire recycling program (1994), the used oil materials recycling program (1997), the electronics recycling program (2004), and the paint and paint containers recycling program (2007).

Alberta remains to have the highest per capita waste disposal rate of any province in Canada. At one point, the Province had set a goal to reduce the provincial per capita waste disposal rate to 500 kg per person per year by 2010. This goal has not been achieved, nor has the Province set new targets to assist municipalities in achieving higher diversion from landfills. The per capita disposal rate for Alberta in 2014 was 981 kg per person (Stats Can), with a provincial diversion rate of only 16%.

In 2013, Environment & Parks (at that time ESRD) had completed an extensive consultation on the development of a new recycling regulation that would include necessary regulatory amendments to existing programs that would ensure long term sustainability. As a result, a Designated Materials Recycling Regulation package was proposed for decision makers' review.

The package proposed several changes to the Province's existing regulatory framework for recycling materials. The proposed changes are intended to:

- streamline Alberta's regulatory framework, while reducing solid waste;
- provide options to shift end-of-life management responsibilities from taxpayers to producers and consumers;
- consolidate Alberta's existing recycling regulations under one regulation – the Designated Materials Recycling Regulation;
- remove specified maximum environmental fees from regulation while still ensuring consumer protection from excessive fees;



- expand the electronics program to include small appliances, audio/visual equipment, telecommunications equipment and power tools; and
- expand the used oil materials recycling program to include automotive anti-freeze/coolant containers and diesel exhaust fluid containers.

In 2013, a resolution was put forward to AUMA by the City of Red Deer regarding the need for these regulatory changes. In January 2014, the Government Response to that resolution indicated that the Province was considering several changes and would engage AUMA and its members when the Province determined its next steps. At today's date, the Province has yet to make any of the needed action steps to resolve this issue.

ANALYSIS:

This issue affects all municipalities in Alberta that provide collection points for materials covered under the Province's programs.

With the exception of the beverage container recycling program, municipalities across Alberta are the collection point for these programs, and thus are the connection between the Province's regulations and residents.

Through the recycling fees that are collected at point of purchase for all of these materials, these programs were originally intended to fully fund collection, transportation and recycling. These fees are set in regulation making it difficult for the stewardship organizations to adjust their programs based on economic fluctuations. As a result, municipalities are left to subsidize these programs in their local communities.

Some economic, environmental and social impacts include:

- municipalities are subsidizing the paint program by about 40-60%;
- it is becoming increasingly difficult to secure reliable collection services for the tire program;
- in some parts of the Province, oil collection has discontinued leaving residents without an option for environmentally safe disposal; and
- the continued expectation of Albertans that their municipality will provide diversion services in their community despite difficult circumstances.

Expansion of the existing provincial recycling programs would also assist with waste diversion. For example, many municipalities are already currently recycling, at their own cost, additional electronic items (ie. microwaves, power tools, entertainment equipment, etc.) and antifreeze containers that are not part of the Province's current lists.

Provincial programs are being strained financially adding extra stress on municipalities. It is the right time for the Province to make these regulatory amendments, which would represent an important first step in enhancing Alberta's waste reduction record.