



History of Extended Producer Responsibility in Canada

Recycling Council of Alberta
EPR 101 Webinar – Back to Basics
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Presentation Outline

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Early Context

Technical innovation from WW II fed post-war consumerism

- Centralized mass production with distribution systems
- Introduction of plastic products and packaging

With waste increasing, governments regulated management

- From dumps to sanitary landfills; from open burning to EFW facilities

By 1970s, renewed interest in forms of waste management other than dump or burn

- Some jurisdictions introduced deposits on beverage containers
- Community recycling efforts introduced 'source separation' of waste for recycling and established drop-off depots
- Early projects to test curbside collection of a short list of source separated materials: newspapers; magazines; clear, green and brown glass packaging; steel cans; aluminum cans



Early Context

Governments gradually shifted attention from regulating disposal to encouraging diversion i.e. 3Rs

- Governments developed or updated waste management plans with diversion goals
- Governments gradually introduced curbside collection of recyclables

Some businesses became involved

- Corporate leaders took public positions supporting household recycling services and offered funding to help municipalities introduce services

Recycling markets emerged

- Pulp and paper mills converted to de-ink post-consumer papers
- Steel mills began to accept post-consumer steel cans
- Aluminum mills began to accept post-consumer cans
- Glass kilns began to accept post-consumer colour-sorted glass bottles
- Expectation that market revenue would eventually offset costs



Early Canadian Initiatives

Governments established product stewardship systems to collect and recycle beverage containers and certain products

- Beverage container deposit systems e.g.
 - BC implemented deposits in 1970
 - Alberta implemented deposits in 1972
 - Saskatchewan implemented deposits in 1973
 - Quebec implemented deposits in 1984
 - More provinces/territories followed in 1990s and 2000s

- Delivery of recycling programs by crown and non-crown corporations established by provincial governments e.g.
 - Recyc-Québec (Québec) in 1990 to manage tires
 - ARMA (Alberta) in 1992 to manage tires
 - MMSB (Nfld) in 1996 to manage beverage containers and tires
 - BCMB (Alberta) in 1997 to manage beverage containers



Origins of EPR

Extended producer responsibility first proposed in 1990 in report to Swedish Ministry of Environment

- Policy approach under which producers are responsible for collection and management of post-consumer wastes
- Links producers who control product design to end-of-life management
- Shifts end-of-life costs from taxpayers to consumers
- Expected that producers would consider end-of-life when designing products/packaging and utilize recovered materials in production

Governments began to utilize EPR as a legislative tool

- In 1991, Germany implemented a Packaging Ordinance requiring that producers assume responsibility for packaging
- In 1994, the EU introduced the Packaging Waste Directive based on EPR; member states implemented national legislation to manage packaging through EPR



Early EPR in Canada

- Federal government hosted workshops to discuss EPR in 1997
- CCME issues *Canada-Wide Action Plan for EPR* in 2009 which called for provinces to utilize EPR for specific materials by 2015
- Provinces began to legislate EPR e.g.
 - BC's Paint Regulation in 1994 & Used Oil Regulation in 2003
 - Quebec's Used Oil Regulation in 2005
 - Manitoba's Tires Regulation in 2006
- Some provinces adopted a *shared responsibility* approach for household packaging and paper products to accommodate municipal services
 - Ontario: 50% producer funding from 2003
 - Quebec: starting at 50% producer funding in 2005
 - Manitoba: 80% producer funding from 2010
 - Saskatchewan: 75% producer funding from 2015
- Some voluntary corporate initiatives e.g. refrigerants from 2000; agricultural products from 2010



Drivers for Evolution

Broad social concerns

- Disposal of non-renewable resources
- Consumption of renewable resources at rates in excess of regeneration
- Shift from linear make/waste to circular management of resources

Municipal economic concerns

- Managing an increasingly complex household recycling stream
- Inability to forecast and prepare for changes in recycling stream
- Increasing operating costs as recycling stream becomes more complex
- Uncertain commodity markets
- Challenges to budget for recycling services and operate within budget

Producer economic concerns

- Lack of level playing field among competing companies
- Increasing fees for shared responsibility programs without ability to directly manage costs



Forms of Evolution

Provinces implemented enabling legislation e.g.

- Ontario's Waste Diversion Act in 2002
- BC's Recycling Regulation in 2004

Changing role for provincial governments

From operators to regulators e.g.

- In BC, when Schedule 1 was added to Recycling Regulation, a producer responsibility organization assumed responsibility for the province's deposit system
- In 2016, Ontario replaced WDO, which had simple oversight responsibility, with RPRA, a regulatory authority with ability to issue administrative penalties and compliance orders

Shift from shared responsibility to EPR

- Québec increased producers' contribution from 50% to 100%
- Ontario is moving from 50% Blue Box funding to producers being fully responsible with transition expected to be completed by 2026



Forms of Evolution

Changing role for producers

- From reactive to proactive e.g. national producer associations worked to establish common programs across provinces
- From funders to operators e.g. in 2011, BC added Schedule 5 to its Recycling Regulation requiring producers to assume responsibility for household packaging and paper products
- From funders to liable parties e.g. in Ontario, as industry funding organizations and their programs are wound up and RRCEA regulations are implemented, individual producers assume responsibility and liability for performance

Changing role for municipal governments

- From being the originator of recycling services to providing collection services on behalf of obligated producers



Canadian Approach Today

	Packaging & Paper		Electronics	Tires	Other Automotive		Other HSW		
BC	EPR		EPR	EPR	EPR		EPR		
AB			PS	PS	PS		PS	S	EPR
SK	S		EPR	EPR	EPR		EPR		
MN	S		EPR	EPR	EPR		EPR		
ON	S	(> IPR)	IPR	IPR	EPR	(> IPR)	EPR	(> IPR)	
QU	S		EPR	PS	EPR		EPR		
NB			EPR	PS	EPR		EPR		
PEI			EPR	PS	EPR		EPR		
NS			EPR	PS	PS		EPR		
NFLD			EPR	PS	PS		EPR		

Summarized from CCME's Status Report on Canada-Wide Action Plan with updates

PS - Product Stewardship

S - Shared

EPR - Extended Producer Responsibility

IPR - Individual Producer Responsibility



Evolution Continues

International initiatives

- Changing role of China in world commodity markets
- New Basel Convention includes plastic waste exports as of Jan 1, 2021

Federal initiatives

- CCME's Canada-Wide Action Plan on Plastic Waste released in 2019
- Ban on plastic checkout bags, straws, stir sticks, six-pack rings, cutlery, and food ware made from hard-to-recycle plastics scheduled for 2021

Provincial initiatives

- Provinces with EPR programs are focusing on plan renewals, reviewing performance targets and enforcement
- Provinces without producer involvement in managing household packaging and paper are considering how to proceed

Producer initiatives

- Canada Plastics Pact includes 2025 targets e.g. eliminate problematic packaging; 55% recycled/composted; 30% recycled content 