

**Ministry  
of the  
Environment**

Office of the Minister

135 St. Clair Ave. West  
12th Floor  
Toronto ON M4V 1P5  
Tel (416) 314-6790  
Fax (416) 314-6748

**Ministère  
de  
l'Environnement**

Bureau du ministre

135, avenue St. Clair ouest  
12<sup>e</sup> étage  
Toronto ON M4V 1P5  
Tél (416) 314-6790  
Télééc (416) 314-6748



ENV1283MC-2008-3767

October 16, 2008

Mr. Andrew Pollock  
Vice-Chair  
Waste Diversion Ontario  
45 Sheppard Avenue East, Suite 920  
North York ON M2N 5W9

Dear Mr. Pollock:

I am pleased to write to the Board of Directors of Waste Diversion Ontario (WDO) regarding the continuing evolution of the Blue Box Program Plan (BBPP).

The current Blue Box Program (BBP) has been successful. I want to compliment WDO on the program achievements already made, including reaching 63 percent diversion in 2006, surpassing the program target. Yet we have heard from stakeholders that there are ongoing challenges, and that it is time to reflect on the current framework and determine the most appropriate path forward.

Pursuant to clauses 5(h) and 5(i) of the *Waste Diversion Act, 2002*, (WDA), I request that WDO conduct a review of the BBPP in accordance with this letter and the enclosed addendum. The principles of extended producer responsibility should form the framework for the review and be considered when WDO submits its advice and report. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) principles extend a producer's physical and financial responsibility for a product to its entire life cycle and provide an incentive for broader consideration of the product's environmental footprint.

The BBPP review shall be completed in a manner that is transparent and incorporates consultation with relevant stakeholders, including members of the public, municipalities, businesses, BBP stewards and environmental non-government organizations.

**By March 20, 2009**, please conclude your review and submit to me a report that:

- summarizes the BBPP review process that was completed, including stakeholder consultation;
- makes recommendations regarding the BBPP issues, including the rationale for the recommendations such as key arguments made during stakeholder consultation; and
- indicates how EPR principles shaped the framework of the review and informed the recommendations.

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Mr. Andrew Pollock  
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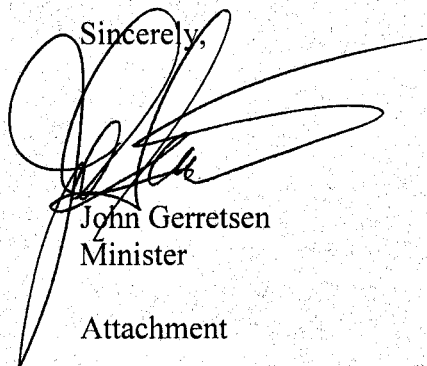
An addendum to this letter has been attached which provides additional direction for the requested program review.

I request that WDO consult with Mr. John Vidan, Director of the Waste Management Policy Branch, to further discuss and develop the details of the BBPP review.

I am pleased that we are building on the success of the Blue Box Program and working together to meet our shared goal of serving Ontarians with a robust and effective waste diversion framework.

Thank you for your continued commitment to enhancing waste diversion in Ontario.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Gerretsen', is written over the typed name and extends upwards and to the right.

John Gerretsen  
Minister

Attachment

Addendum to the Minister's Request Letter to Waste Diversion Ontario for a review of the Blue Box Program Plan:

Please provide recommendations regarding the following issues:

1. ***Program performance:***

The BBPP has reached its 60% waste diversion target. A new target may encourage further increases in waste diversion.

Recommend a new target for the next 5 years of the BBPP that goes beyond the 60% target originally set for the 2004-2008 period.

2. ***Material-specific performance:***

Certain Blue Box wastes are not achieving high diversion rates (e.g., plastics), and may benefit from material-specific diversion targets.

Recommend material-specific diversion targets for Blue Box wastes to encourage further increases in waste diversion for the next 5 years of the BBPP.

3. ***Consistency across municipalities:***

The collection of different Blue Box wastes across Ontario municipalities creates public confusion.

Recommend how the program can achieve greater consistency in the Blue Box wastes that are collected across Ontario municipalities to minimize public confusion, facilitate province wide communication and outreach activities, and encourage further increases in waste diversion for the next 5 years of the BBPP.

**4. *Problematic wastes:***

Some Blue Box or non-Blue Box wastes create operational inefficiencies for municipal recycling programs and may increase costs. An example of a problematic blue box waste is the 15 litre non-refillable water bottle.

Recommend how problematic Blue Box and non-Blue Box wastes can be addressed through the BBPP or other mechanisms.

**5. *Blue Box wastes from the IC&I sector:***

The industrial, commercial and institutional (IC&I) sector generates more designated Blue Box wastes than the residential sector, but is not included in the BBPP.

Recommend if, and how, the BBPP could be extended to include Blue Box wastes generated by the IC&I sector.

**6. *Blue Box wastes collected outside of the Blue Box:***

Blue Box wastes not captured in the Blue Box are collected as garbage or litter by municipalities, fully at their cost.

Recommend (1) how collection options beyond municipal curbside and depot could be used to increase collection of Blue Box wastes and (2) how steward responsibility can be used to address Blue Box wastes that are collected beyond municipal curbside and depot, or disposed as waste or litter.

**7. *Additional Blue Box wastes:***

Some of the designated Blue Box wastes, such as plastic products, are not included in the BBPP.

Recommend how the BBPP can be expanded to include additional wastes already designated by regulation within the program.

**8. *Environmentally responsible management:***

There are concerns that some Blue Box wastes may not be managed in an environmentally responsible manner, including waste marketed in Ontario or sent offshore.

Recommend mechanisms that can be added to the BBPP to assure that Blue Box wastes are managed in an environmentally responsible manner from collection to final market.

**9. *Stewardship fees:***

Current steward fees for certain Blue Box wastes may be too low to encourage either increased waste diversion or the use of materials in product manufacturing or packaging that can be easily recycled.

Recommend how the steward fee structure can be revised to (1) increase the waste diversion rate for certain Blue Box wastes (e.g., plastics) and (2) encourage stewards to incorporate materials that are easily recycled into their products or packaging.

**10. *EPR funding:***

The BBPP does not reflect full Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) funding since the WDA requires Blue Box stewards to fund 50% of municipal program costs, with municipalities funding the rest.

Recommend how to move the BBPP towards full EPR funding. Since different collection and processing systems for Blue Box wastes are the result of decisions made by local municipalities, in your review and recommendation, please consider the potential impact to the management of municipal recycling programs as industry moves to full EPR funding.