

To: Regional and Corporate Services Committee
From: Jamie Benton, Environmental Policy Analyst

Date: 2020-10-15
File No: 5365-28-001

Subject: Update on Provincial Solid Waste Initiatives

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Fraser Valley Regional District Board direct staff to submit comments to support the expansion of BC Extended Producer Responsibility programs as is proposed in the Province's Recycling Regulation Intentions Paper.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Support Environmental Stewardship

PRIORITIES

Priority #1 Waste Management

BACKGROUND

As part of the BC Plastics Action Plan released in November, 2019, the Province has been preparing to amend the *BC Recycling Regulation* to expand the products included within Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs. EPR programs are designed to implement the 'polluter pay principle' by making the producer responsible for the cost and management of the product throughout the product's life cycle. There are currently 22 EPR stewardship programs in BC that include packaging and printed paper products, tires, cell phones, etc.

On September 12, 2020, the Province released a Recycling Regulation Policy Intentions Paper¹ that discusses expansion of BC's EPR program. Feedback on this expansion is currently being received.

DISCUSSION

The Province's Recycling Regulation Policy Intentions Paper identifies products that could be considered for an expansion of the current Extended Producer Responsibility program.

Items being considered include:

- Mattresses
- Electronic and electrical products, including electric vehicle batteries
- Packaging and paper products beyond residential sources

¹ <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/consultation/recycling-regulation-policy-intentions-paper/>

- Single-use products such as plastic cutlery, sandwich bags, stir sticks and other items (note: it is unclear whether these products will be added to existing stewardship programs or whether they would be considered as a new EPR program).

The Province is soliciting feedback on this EPR expansion until Nov 20, 2020.

Expansion of EPR programs to include those listed will assist with recycling efforts and will reduce the likelihood of these products ending up in landfills. Overall, the changes will improve the effectiveness of recycling efforts and will help the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) meet its Solid Waste Management Plan goals. FVRD staff proposed to provide comments in support of expanding EPR and to include those mentioned as well as other items where it should be considered (e.g., vaping products).

In addition to potential changes involving EPR programs, there are several other new initiatives or decisions recently announced by the Province that pertain to solid waste management in BC. Updates on these are provided below. These include court decisions related to local government bans on single use plastics, changes to the Return-It Program, and funding available for new organic waste processing infrastructure or curbside collection programs.

Single Use Plastic Bylaws

Over the past two years, numerous local governments have proposed bylaws that implement bans on single-use packaging within their jurisdiction. These bylaws were challenged and the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that they were not valid as they needed Provincial approvals first. Several local governments have since submitted their bylaws, the first of which (District of Saanich) was approved by the Province earlier this year and is now in force.

On September 12, 2020, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy announced its intention of proceeding with approval of several other local bylaws, including those for Richmond, Victoria, Tofino, and Ucluelet. Other bylaws will be considered as they are submitted. The Province is also considering amendments to the *Community Charter* that will allow local governments to ban single-use plastics without requiring provincial approval.

Return-It Program

During summer 2020, the Provincial Government announced the following changes to the Return-It program, the deposit system imposed on refundable beverage containers that encourages recycling of these products:

- A minimum deposit has been established at \$0.10/container. Encorp phased out the \$0.05/container deposit earlier this year and in October will phase out the \$0.20/container fee to streamline the deposit to 10 cents for all beverage containers.
- Electronic fund transfers are now permitted within the regulation allowing other forms of payment than just “cash refund.”

- Starting on February 1, 2022, milk and milk substitute products will come under the Encorp, Return-It program in the deposit-refund system. At present, these products are collected from residential premises through the Recycle BC program for packaging and paper product.

New Funding For Local Governments

The Province recently invited applications for new funding being provided as part of the CleanBC Organics Infrastructure and Collection Program (OICP). From October 1, 2020 until January 14, 2021, applications will be accepted for two distinct project streams:

1. Organics Processing Infrastructure: To support the building of new or expansion of existing, organic waste processing infrastructure to increase processing capacity.
2. Residential Curbside Collection: To support the development of new, or the expansion of existing, residential organic waste curbside programs.

FVRD staff are inquiring into the eligibility of these programs to potentially help fund education and engagement efforts with respect to implementation of the FVRD's recent Source Separation Bylaw.

COST

There are no budgetary impacts.

CONCLUSION

The BC Government has recently announced a number of new initiatives related to solid waste management. One of these initiatives, a Recycling Regulation Intentions Paper, proposes an expansion of EPR programs. Staff propose to submit comments in support of these EPR efforts.

COMMENTS BY:

Stacey Barker, Director of Regional Services: Reviewed and supported.

Kelly Lownsbrough, Chief Financial Officer/ Director of Financial Services:

Reviewed and supported.

Jennifer Kinneman, Chief Administrative Officer: Reviewed and supported.