

Report to the WDO

A Commentary on the Proposed Funding Plan for Residential Waste Diversion from Ontario's Environmental Community

>Prepared by

Toronto Environmental Alliance

June 19th, 2000

Part 1:

Summary of Meeting and Commentary by ENGO Representatives

Summary

On June 12th, 2000, representatives from eight environmental organizations (ENGOS) met with representatives from the Waste Diversion Organization (WDO) to discuss the WDO's proposed funding plan for residential waste diversion in the province of Ontario. For the morning section of the meeting, the ENGO representatives met with each other to develop a consensus on their commentary to the WDO. The afternoon section of the meeting, which was attended by representatives from the WDO, began with a short presentation of the WDO's plan to divert 50% of residential waste. The rest of the meeting was spent discussing some of the concerns and comments the ENGO representatives had found consensus on in the morning. The meeting ended with no concrete decisions for collaboration or consultation between the WDO and the ENGO representatives in the future.

Attendees

Lynda Lukasik Great Lakes United

John Jackson Citizen's Network on Waste Management

Rhonda Hustler Rural Action

Joe Castrili Rural Action

Doug Macdonald University of Toronto: Environmental Studies

Gord Perks TEA

Clarissa Morawski CM Consulting

Ben Bennet Guelph

Lois Corbett TEA

Katrina Miller TEA

Elisabeth Bruckmann Canadian Environmental Law Association

Diane Humphrey Lorrie and Love Consulting

Kathleen Brosemer Clean North and North Watch Karen Clark Canadian Environmental Law and Policy

Damion Bassett WDO (from Corporations Supporting Recycling)

Geoff Rathbone WDO (from Corporations Supporting Recycling)

Derek Stephenson WDO (from Corporations Supporting Recycling)

Barbara McConnell WDO (from Corporations Supporting Recycling)

John Hanson WDO (from Recycling Council of Ontario)

Tony Eames WDO (from Coca Cola Ltd.)

Peter Elwood WDO (from Lipton)

Terry Cassidy WDO (Councillor: City of Quinte West)

ENGO Commentary

During the morning section of the meeting, ENGO representatives were able to reach consensus on the following points of comment.

- The WDO and the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to develop a funding plan for residential waste diversion in Ontario. Yet the process of developing the MOU and the plan itself has lacked mechanisms of meaningful consultation with ENGOs and the public at large. Comprehensive consultation is absolutely necessary to the success of such a funding plan.
- The funding plan will not achieve waste reduction without a complementary regulatory framework that enforces overall waste reduction by providing incentives to industry to change their current packaging and product design practices. Specifically, recycled content and returnable packaging legislation is necessary.
- The incentives discussed in the WDO Backgrounder and the WDO guiding principles place the weight of behavioral change on the side of municipalities while incentives for industry are described as "collective". Collective incentives are inherently flawed. If the WDO desires to implement incentives that will cause behavioral change on the product producer's side, as representatives expressed at the meeting, then this must be explicitly stated in the WDO's Guiding Principles.
- There is a significant discrepancy between the WDO's goal of 50% waste diversion in relation to current per capita rates, and Ontario's original goal of 50% waste diversion in relation to overall rates, which included an absolute cap on garbage going to landfill or incineration. The WDO's

current mechanism for measuring the diversion of waste does not embody the full idea of overall waste reduction, and under this mechanism, the WDO's plan will not come close to achieving the original targets set by the Province of Ontario in 1986.

- The funding-based incentives detailed in the WDO Backgrounder for municipalities are largely inappropriate. They penalize municipalities for having "inefficient" waste diversion systems, yet these "inefficiencies" are mostly due to the lack of funding municipalities have received in recent years. The industry members of the WDO, as the creators of the packaging that ends up in the waste stream, should put the priority on focusing on their own inefficiencies.
- The proposed considerations for remote communities do not give due acknowledgement of the unique situation of northern communities. There is no consideration for the shipping packaging that remote northern communities are burdened with, which is often unrecyclable. Also, under the current incentive plan, municipalities are rewarded if they consume a larger amount of certain products, such as soda pop. Remote communities tend to consume less of these products and will be penalized accordingly.
- The WDO is proposing a five-year funding plan and it is uncertain what will happen to funding at the end of five years. If municipalities are expected to spend money on developing more efficient systems in order to receive WDO funding, they need better assurances that the funding will last and that they will not be left holding the bag.
- Under the current funding formula, the WDO will only fund up to 50% of municipal programs and depending on system inefficiencies, funding will be much less for many municipalities. The ENGOs represented at the meeting believe that WDO should fund more than 50% of municipal diversion programs despite inefficiencies.

In conclusion, due to the lack of consultation of the ENGOs by the WDO, the ENGOs have agreed to releasing their own report on what would be appropriate waste diversion funding and regulations for the province of Ontario, to provide the MOE with an alternative to the WDO's plan.

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