

From: Minister, MECP <minister.mecp@ontario.ca>

Sent: Monday, June 14, 2021 4:33 PM

To: Allan Thompson <allan.thompson@caledon.ca>

Subject: Response from the Honourable Jeff Yurek, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

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357-2021-1843

Dear Mayor Thompson:

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the finalization of the Blue Box regulation and the importance of a timely transition of the Blue Box Program to full producer responsibility.

On June 3rd, I announced the release of a final regulation that makes producers financially and operationally responsible for the Blue Box program. Following extensive public consultation, Ontario is improving blue box recycling by standardizing what goes in the blue box, expanding services to more communities across the province, and saving municipalities money by making producers of products and packaging fully responsible for the cost and operation of the program.

The new regulation will transition the costs away from municipal taxpayers to make the producers of products and packaging responsible starting on July 1, 2023. The transition process will be fully complete by January 1, 2026.

Making producers responsible for the delivery of Ontario's Blue Box Program will ensure that our recycling program can divert more waste from landfills. These changes will make recycling more convenient and accessible for Ontarians. Once producers are fully responsible for the program, Ontarians will experience the same or improved access to blue box services across the province.

The new producer responsibility model will also provide people more opportunities to recycle by expanding recycling services to more facilities, such as apartment buildings, schools, municipally run or non-profit retirement homes and long-term care homes and some public spaces, like parks, playgrounds and transit stations, more than tripling the number of public space recycling bins funded under the current program so there are more opportunities to recycle at home and on the go.

Combining the various local programs into a single provincial collection system will encourage producers to find efficiencies to make recycling simpler and easier for residents, while also driving innovation in recycling practices and technologies – fueling job creation and attracting investment right here in Ontario.

Thank you again for writing, and please accept my best wishes.

Sincerely,

Jeff Yurek
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

c: The Honourable Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

The Honourable Sylvia Jones
Solicitor General



Allan Thompson
Mayor

May 14, 2021

Hon. Jeff Yurek
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
Whitney Block 6th Flr Rm 6630, 99 Wellesley St W
Toronto, ON M7A 1W3

Dear Minister Yurek,

Re: Renewing the Blue Box Program

I am writing to inform you of growing municipal concerns related to the delay in the new Blue Box program regulation. Municipal governments have worked closely with your government since you took office in 2018 in order to transform the Blue Box program to improve both environmental and economic outcomes. We have been strong supporters of your government's proposed approach and worked closely with all stakeholders to assist the government in developing a balanced regulation.

This is an important and critical change for municipal governments and for Ontario. All key stakeholders - municipalities, producers of waste, haulers, and environmental groups – have agreed that the current waste diversion system is broken. Record amounts of plastics, new forms of packaging and litter are being generated, and the current diversion system cannot keep up. Addressing these issues through fundamental changes to the Blue Box program through a new and anticipated regulation is a key commitment made by this government.

It is worth underlining that this is not a new consultation – every position and perspective, from all stakeholders has been clearly expressed over the last two years of focused and collective work. The government, has on multiple occasions, committed to transitioning the Blue Box program between 2023 – 2025, and municipal governments have planned and acted accordingly.

The Government has now missed two key deadlines for this expected regulation. Any further delay will have major repercussions for municipalities that have extended contracts at cost premiums to align with the Province's timeline. These additional costs will need to be borne by property taxpayers.

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF CALEDON

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Uncertainty is not good for business, nor for proper planning. By moving forward with this regulation as soon as possible, both industry and government can take the appropriate time over the next two years to ensure the transition is smooth and successful. But this regulation needs to be in place now, without further delay, so this transition can be operationalized in a manner that these changes to the Blue Box program are seamless to the public and avoid significant cost increases.

We understand there are industry outliers who may be dissatisfied with the broad stakeholder consensus achieved by accountable industry, government and environmental groups. But an outdated system that requires property taxpayers to subsidize polluters is no longer acceptable, as your government has boldly confirmed. We also understand the majority of companies support these changes as they did two years ago when David Lindsay helped to achieve consensus on the path forward.

There have been intensive, multi-stakeholder consultations on the development of this regulation over the last two years. We urge you to take action with a regulation that will:

- Establish a province-wide collection system for all Ontarians, including all communities regardless of size, all dwelling types, schools, retirement homes, long-term care facilities and municipal public spaces (e.g., parks, playground, outdoor areas and streetscapes in business improvement areas);
- Enhance the materials collected to include packaging-like products (e.g., freezer bags, pie plates) and single use items that if excluded add to consumer confusion and to the costs of the overall system; and
- Establish best in class recycling targets.

We hope your government will meet its commitment and achieve what previous governments have failed to. Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,



Mayor Allan Thompson

- c. Hon. Sylvia Jones, MPP Dufferin Caledon
Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs

