

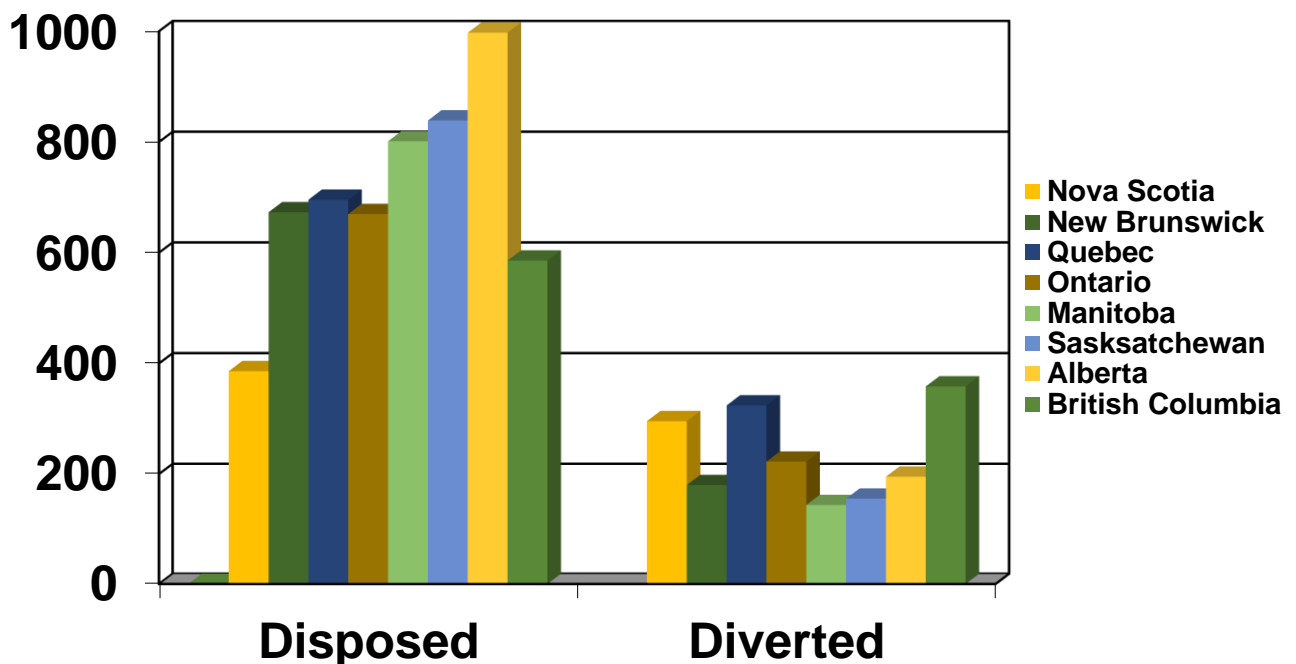
Join the campaign to modernize Alberta's recycling regulatory framework

AUMA is calling on municipalities throughout Alberta to join us in advocating for the Government of Alberta to implement regulatory changes to enable the expansion of provincial recycling programs for electronics, tires, paint and used oil, and to develop a paper and packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program that encourages producers to initiate long-term waste reduction from the source.

Why action is needed

Alberta is the most wasteful province in Canada with an annual rate of disposal to the landfill just under 1,000 kilograms (kg) per person compared to the Canadian average of approximately 700 kg per person.

Source: Statistics Canada 2014 data (Data from the territories, NL and PEI is not provided due to confidentiality reasons)



This poor result is partially due to Alberta's outdated recycling regulations, some of which have not been updated since 1997. Alberta used to be a leader in diverting waste through recycling. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the province adopted regulations, which established provincially-regulated stewardship programs for beverage containers, used oil materials, tires, paint, and electronics. The programs are managed by organizations that operate at arm's length from government and report to the Minister of Environment and Parks. They are governed by Boards of Directors that include

representatives of the AUMA and Rural Municipalities of Alberta, which helps ensure they have an effective working relationship with municipalities throughout Alberta.

The regulations governing the beverage container program enable the program operator to set fees that cover the costs associated with the beverage container collection system. Unfortunately, the

regulations governing other designated materials specify the fees that can be collected, making it difficult to make adjustments to ensure the costs of delivering the program are covered.

Provincial Recycling- Delegated Authorities

- The [Beverage Container Management Board](#) (BCMB) manages the deposit return program for beverage containers.
- The [Alberta Recycling Management Authority](#) (Alberta Recycling) manages programs for electronics, paint, and tires.
- The [Alberta Used Oil Management Association](#) (AUOMA) manages the program for used oil, containers and filters.

For example, the fees on lubricating oil are set out in regulation and have not been updated in 20 years. The fees no longer cover the costs of their collection and recycling. AUOMA was forced to close collection sites and municipalities are left to collect and manage this material. In response to these challenges, the Government of Alberta recently announced that it is transferring the delegation of the used oil materials from AUOMA to Alberta Recycling, the same organization overseeing Alberta's tires, electronics, and paint recycling. AUMA wants to work with Alberta Recycling to reestablish collection sites for used oil and plans to meet with Alberta Recycling once the transfer is completed.

The limited scope of the programs adds to the challenge. For example, the electronics recycling program run is limited to old televisions, computers, printers, copiers, scanners and fax machines; other electronics such as small appliances, power tools and audio-visual equipment often end up in municipal waste management programs. Fluctuating markets for recycled materials make it costly for municipalities to process these materials.

The solution

In late 2013, the Government of Alberta held public consultations on [proposed changes](#) to Alberta's recycling regulatory framework with the intention to:

- streamline Alberta's regulatory framework;
- provide options to shift end-of-life management responsibilities from municipal taxpayers to producers and consumers; and
- reduce municipal solid waste in Alberta.

Input from municipalities and other stakeholders indicated strong support for expanding Alberta's electronics, tires, paint, and used oil recycling programs and ensuring they account for new products entering our marketplace. There was also strong support for regulatory changes that offer Alberta's recycling programs more flexibility to set environmental fees that keep pace with the costs of maintaining Albertans' access to these programs. Even with broad support from municipalities and other stakeholders, the Government of Alberta has not taken action.

In addition to the immediate need to update existing recycling programs, there is also a need for the Alberta government to engage municipalities in developing solutions for products such as paper

packaging, printed materials, and agricultural plastics. Municipalities are now facing increased challenges in collecting, sorting and finding markets for these materials especially after policy changes overseas. Many municipalities are forced to increase their recycling fees or reduce materials collected in their residential recycling program. Municipalities do not have the right tools to deal with the challenges.

Facing new recycling challenges, other Canadian provinces have demonstrated leadership by developing programs that focus on long-term waste reduction by encouraging producers of the product to take on the responsibility of recycling. For example, Saskatchewan recently passed a regulation to require businesses selling, distributing or importing grain bags to participate in and fund a government-approved recycling program for agricultural plastics. British Columbia (BC) has adopted an EPR approach in which the producers' responsibility for reducing environmental impact and managing the product is extended across the whole life cycle of the product, from a selection of materials and design to its end-of-life. Thanks to this approach, BC's paper and packaging EPR program have saved municipalities more than [\\$74 million](#) per year as producers have taken the responsibility of their waste and allow municipalities to focus on other pressing municipal matters.

Get involved

AUMA has developed a [letter template](#) that you can download and adapt to send to your MLA outlining the need for provincial action to improve waste management in Alberta.

Check out AUMA's [Waste Management Hub](#) for information and resources to help your municipality reduce, reuse, recycle and recover.

If you have any questions about the letter writing campaign or AUMA's approach to waste management, email advocacy@auma.ca.