



MEMBER REQUEST FOR DECISION SPRING 2018 MUNICIPAL LEADERS' CAUCUS

DATE:

March 15, 2018

TOPIC:

Legislation for the implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) in Alberta

RECOMMENDATION:

That the AUMA and its members advocate that the Government of Alberta, in consultation with Alberta municipalities, industry and other stakeholders, develop and implement legislation to establish Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) in Alberta in a timely manner.

BACKGROUND:

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is an environmental policy approach in which the producer of a product is responsible for that product through the post-consumer stage of its life cycle. EPR shifts the responsibility and costs of recycling from local governments to producers. This incentivizes producers to reduce waste associated with their products and packaging, and to create products that are readily reusable or recyclable.

ANALYSIS:

In 2009, as a member of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME), the Government of Alberta committed to working towards the development of EPR programs for priority products and materials. Alberta has not yet implemented a legislated EPR program, while all other provinces have implemented or are in the process of implementing a form of EPR regulation.

Recycling programs and the associated costs and risks of collecting, processing and marketing materials is currently the responsibility of The City of Calgary and other Alberta municipalities. Risks associated with the volatile recycling commodity market (for example the current restrictions due to the Chinese National Sword program) are entirely carried by municipalities and the taxpayer.

The lack of a province-wide EPR program prevents The City of Calgary and all Alberta municipalities from reaping the benefits of EPR, utilizing opportunities for financial savings, and reducing the burden on the environment. EPR offers the opportunity to shift the financial responsibility for waste diversion upstream to the producer. This incentivizes producers to reduce waste associated with their products and packaging, and to create products that are readily reusable or recyclable.



Provincial EPR programs could offer many benefits to Alberta's environment and economy. A producer responsibility organization would be accountable to the provincial government to meet recycling targets across the province and would increase overall provincial diversion of materials. Programs can increase customer awareness of consumption in general and for recycling and reuse in particular.

Improved resource recovery reduces reliance on non-renewable resources, and therefore the impact on the natural environment. It can also lead to reduced greenhouse gas emissions, as manufacturers switch to recycled materials in manufacturing processes rather than using energy-intensive methods of mining or harvesting virgin materials.

Finally, studies have shown that waste diversion programs can create up to 10 times more jobs than waste disposal. EPR will support waste diversion programs across Alberta and reduce costs of diversion programs for tax payers.

Provincial legislation is required to enable an EPR framework in Alberta. Municipal engagement with the Province during program design will help to ensure that EPR legislation in Alberta meets the needs and matches the long-term financial and diversion goals of The City of Calgary and other Alberta municipalities.

Despite a province-wide consultation on EPR in 2013 by Alberta Environment that showed support from municipalities, as well as other stakeholders, no further action has been taken since.

The City of Calgary recognizes that AUMA has been actively advocating for the establishment of EPR programs and is putting forward this RFD to renew, support and strengthen its advocacy efforts.