



Stronger Extended Producer Responsibility: Information Sheet

A part of the Zero Waste & Circular Economy Handbook

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Climate Caucus

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Introduction

[Extended Producer Responsibility \(EPR\)](#) is an environmental policy approach in which a producer's responsibility for a product is extended to the post-consumer stage of a product's life cycle.

The Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment developed the Canada-wide Action Plan for EPR to which all federal, provincial, and territorial jurisdictions signed on in 2009. This plan outlines the key components of EPR programs including full producer responsibility, using the waste hierarchy, covering both residential and non-residential products streams, accountability, transparency, internalized fees, competition, consultation, and design for the environment. The target product categories are laid out in Table 1 below. Since 2009, many provinces and territories have been regulating product categories in line with this plan. No jurisdiction has fully met the targets but progress has been made.

Table 1 Canada-wide Action Plan Product Categories by Target Date

By 2015	By 2017
Packaging and print materials	Construction and demolition
Electronics and electrical products	Furniture
Mercury-containing	Textiles/carpet
Household hazardous waste	Appliances (ozone-depleting)
Automotive products	

Local governments are usually responsible for handling waste but have limited control over products put in the marketplace. These provincial-level (or territorial-level) regulations are intended to decrease the waste, drive better design and transfer the burden from local governments, their taxpayers and the environment to the producers and their consumers.

More recently many provinces have been strengthening their packaging EPR regulations. Many US states and EU countries have also been enacting regulations, some with stronger reuse, research and redesign requirements.



Challenges & Solutions

CHALLENGES	SOLUTIONS
Not all products are covered	• Advocate to provinces and territories to fulfil their commitment on the existing product list, and provide input on the list and scheduling/rollout of next product categories (for example, agricultural plastics and pesticides)
Accessibility	• Work with the province or territory and programs to determine what is a suitable level of accessibility (including the concept that if a depot is needed, it is up to the program to provide it, even if the compensation level has to increase to achieve this) • Ask programs to consider overarching insurance for depots to remove a barrier to depots setting up • Work with EPR programs to have collection events where no permanent local collection exists • Work on having mail-back programs for more remote communities where the products can be mailed to the producers free of charge to the end user
Awareness	• EPR programs should provide communications but local governments can amplify their reach through inclusion in their general local government communications and in their recycling webpages • Ensure program plans have a communications component with targets, measurement and actions
Compensation levels for service	• Measure the work required for staff, and add equipment and space costs to determine the cost to the local government. Work with the EPR programs to ensure fair compensation (whether the proponent or the local government is providing the service)

Who pays for infrastructure	• The CCME plan's intent is that the producers are responsible for this. Work with the province or territory to ensure this is the case
Limited action for reduction, reuse or repair	• Advocate to the province or territory to ensure programs maximize efforts starting at the top of the hierarchy, are responsible for the full life cycle of the product and deliver more than just collection and recycling. • Participate in program consultations to ensure these activities are part of plans
Smaller communities -transportation	• Bring together different programs requiring transport of materials to see if sharing transport can result in better service for smaller communities or new service where none existed.
Low collection levels	• Consider a disposal ban to help direct materials to the correct location. Bans also support haulers in having conversations with their customers.
Collection does not equal recycling	• Need to ensure that programs maximize recycling once work on all higher levels of the hierarchy have been optimized and that the public are clear that collection is only the first step to recycling
Different systems in different municipalities for recycling	• Work to have standard EPR programs for all items, ensure they cover streetscape bins, communicate with consumers and develop systems to drive reduction and redesign
Agricultural plastics	• Push to have an EPR program for these materials. • Encourage the use of other farm practices that do not require plastics

EPR Initiatives

Climate Caucus has ranked the following initiatives from beginner to expert, based on Complexity to implement, Staff time & expertise, and Political capital. Please note, these rankings are our own best judgements.

-  Green Square = Beginner
-  Blue Square = Intermediate
-  Black Diamond = Advanced
-  Double Black Diamond = Expert

Work to have one or multiple hubs for one-stop-dropping for EPR programs in your community

The basics:

- Municipalities can support the formation and function of one-stop hubs for EPR by directing staff to work with EPR programs to make sure good service is delivered to the community in convenient locations
- Municipalities can enact disposal bans on EPR materials to drive diversion and support use of the programs.

Examples:

- [Whistler's Nester's Depot](#), BC
 - Whistler built an area, leased part of it to a company that collects for multiple programs and also leased land to a Re-Use It center so there is a one-stop-drop-spot for waste.
- Metro Vancouver, BC
 - [Disposal bans](#) for all products covered by EPR programs

Advocate the province for very strong EPR programs

The basics:

- Ask for the provincial and territorial governments to deliver on their commitments to the Canada-wide Action Plan for EPR, to plan for the next product categories, and to strengthen their regulations to address the identified issues, including financial penalties for poor performance.
- Ask for the provincial, territorial and federal governments to enact companion regulations to drive Design for the Environment.
- Partner with other local governments to advocate to EPR programs and the relevant ministry for necessary changes (for example, with the BC Product Stewardship Council)

Examples:

- [BC Product Stewardship Council](#) - advocacy by regional districts to EPR programs and the province

Additional Resources

- Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment [Canada-wide Action Plan for EPR](#)
- [Progress Report on the Canada-wide Action Plan for EPR \(CCME, 2014\)](#)
- [BC Product Stewardship Council](#)
- BC First Nations Recycling Initiative – [Starting a Recycling Program Resource Guide](#)
- [RMA webinar to support municipalities with EPR changes happening in AB 2023](#)

Climate Caucus Resources

- [Climate Caucus Municipal Grants List](#) – detailed list of relevant municipal grants
- [Policies and Resources Library](#) – list of motions, bylaws, council reports and briefing notes



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