

July 2010

## **Recycling Council of B.C. – Approved Policy Positions**

### **Public Policy Positions:**

#### **Deposit Refund Systems – Approved November 23, 1992**

“That deposit systems are: consistent with the promotion of conservation and recycling; an important component of a comprehensive waste reduction plan; compatible with other programs, such as curbside recycling.”

#### **3 R’s Hierarchy – Approved May 12, 1993**

“RCBC is committed to the 3R’s hierarchy (reduce, reuse, recycle). The 3R’s is a priority of strategies or techniques that should be employed to reduce waste. The hierarchy is based on a philosophy of environmental sustainability.

Each technique, process or product should stand up to scrutiny through the life-cycle analysis’ (LCA’s) available. Life-cycle analysis is defined as the identification and analysis of the environmental impacts associated with a product, package, or service through all stages, from initial resources extraction through to final disposal. If comprehensive, reliable LCA’s are not available, the basis for political action should be maintaining the 3R’s hierarchy.

RCBC’s commitment to the 3R’s hierarchy is consistent with the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) which has adopted the policy that “there is a hierarchy with the three R’s. Source Reduction will be considered first, with elimination, i.e. no packaging, being the most favoured option. Re-use is the second favoured option, with Recycling third. It is important that the three R’s be considered in this sequence in order to determine the best combination of solutions to achieve maximum diversion in the most cost effective manner.

In the light of this nationally-accepted policy, RCBC favours continuing to apply the 3R’s in this order. However, when decisions are made, it is also important that the process by which these decisions are made should include input from an advisory committee with a balance of representative interests (public, labour, industry, etc.) which attempts to find consensus.”

#### **Precautionary Principle – Approved March 29, 1994**

“RCBC supports the Precautionary Principle which:

-ensures that substance or activity which poses a threat to the environment is prevented from adversely affecting the environment, even if there is no conclusive scientific proof linking that particular substance or activity to environmental damage.”

#### **Polluter Pays Principle – Approved March 29, 1994**

“RCBC supports the Polluter Pays Principle:

-whoever causes environmental degradation or resource depletion should bear the ‘full-cost’  
-intended to encourage industries to internalize environmental costs and reflect them in the prices of the products.”

**Product Stewardship** – Approved November 29, 1994

“RCBC supports the principle of Product Stewardship that: industries assume responsibility for the full-cost of their products and packaging from ‘cradle to grave’ and consumers support these initiatives.”

**Level Playing Field** - Approved November 29, 1994

“RCBC supports the principle of a Level-Playing Field:

- policies and regulations should apply to all industries operating within a jurisdiction and to all products, both domestic and imported, including those purchased through cross-border shopping.
- within the public process everyone should have equal access to information and adequate opportunity to participate.”

**3 R’s Hierarchy** - Approved November 29, 1994

“RCBC supports the 3R’s Hierarchy: recognizes that pollution prevention, resource conservation, and waste management strategies should give priority to waste avoidance and reduction techniques, implemented in the specific order: source reduction, reuse, and recycling.”

**Ground Rules of Product Stewardship** – Approved September 29, 1995

“RCBC supports the four ground rules of product stewardship:

1. That industries which introduce products and services into the marketplace be obligated to MINIMIZE THE LIFECYCLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT of their products and services by designing their products and marketing systems according to the “3R hierarchy”.
2. That the full costs for operating product waste management systems be borne by the industries whose products and packaging is being managed, with no share borne by the taxpayer.
3. That any “product stewardship” regulation be mandatory and be applied to all products, all industries, and all firms within a particular sector.
4. That “product stewardship” programs must be developed, implemented, and monitored with a system in place to ensure that there is full public involvement, including access to information and participation in decision-making in any areas where industry actions may have an impact on the environment.”

**Solvents and Pesticides** – September 20, 1996

“RCBC supports the inclusion of all ready-to-use pesticide and solvent products and all pesticide and solvent containers within the Solvents and Pesticides Regulation.”

**Zero Waste** – July 21, 2000

“RCBC fully supports the concept of Zero Waste.”

**Extended Producer Responsibility** – December 14, 2001

“RCBC supports the principle of Extended Producer Responsibility: is an environmental protection strategy rising from the Polluter Pays Principle. The strategy objective is to minimize the environmental burden of a product by making the producer/consumer directly responsible for the financial costs and management functions associated with products throughout the product’s life cycle with the particular focus on the post-consumer stage where responsibility has traditionally rested with local government authorities.”

**Revised EPR Policy** – March 15, 2002

“Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is an environmental strategy arising from the Polluter Pays Principle. The strategy objective is to minimize the environmental burden of a product by making the

producer/consumer directly responsible for the financial costs and management functions associated with products throughout the product's life cycle with particular focus on the post-consumer stage where responsibility has traditionally rested with local government authorities."

**Amendment to Beverage Container Stewardship Regulation Program** – Approved August 13, 2002

"RCBC recommends expanding the beverage container deposit refund program to include milk and milk substitutes and that BC consider the benefits of harmonizing with the neighbouring province's program once AB takes action."

**Recycling Regulation: Repeat Dispute Resolution Clause** – Approved November 29, 2002

"RCBC supports that Section 15 (Disputes) be retained as is unless an option is put forward during the review of the Regulation, agreeable to the affected parties, that incorporates the concept of alternative dispute resolution including recourse to the Commercial Arbitration Act."

**Recycling Regulation: Inclusion of a 'Sunset' Clause** - Approved November 29, 2002

"RCBC supports that the Regulation be amended to incorporate a non-sunset Review clause, as regular review is a means of keeping the Regulation both relevant and effective without exposing existing programs to an unnecessary level of risk."

**Recycling Regulation: Revise Stewardship Plan Approval Process** – Approved November 29, 2002

"RCBC supports reviewing the current Approval Process with respect to the involvement of stakeholders, giving consideration to principles of inclusiveness, openness and accountability."

**Brand-Owner Reporting Requirements** - Approved November 29, 2002

"RCBC supports that annual reports be required by all stewardship programs on an agreed date."

**Repeal Return-to-Retail Requirement** - Approved November 29, 2002

"RCBC supports to retain return-to-retail as the basic collection system but revise the Section 3.10 requirements to provide for an unambiguous, open and transparent process for reviewing alternative collection models put forward by brand owners."

**Organics** – Approved October 15, 2004

"RCBC take a position promoting the diversion of organics be as an equally important priority as industry product stewardship."

**Commercial and Industrial Paints** – Approved December 3, 2004

"RCBC recommends to the Ministry to expand the Recycling Regulation to include all commercial and industrial paints."

**Pesticides and Herbicides** - Approved December 3, 2004

"RCBC recommends the expansion of the Recycling Regulation to include all pesticides and herbicides."

**Waste Hierarchy** - Approved December 3, 2004

"RCBC adopt the Hierarchy recommendations from the Policy Committee:

- that the RCBC Board commend the Ministry of WLAP for including pollution prevention hierarchy in its new *Recycling Regulation*, together with strict instructions as to the way that the hierarchy is to be applied; and

- that the RCBC Board call on the Ministry to use science-based judgments to determine what level of the hierarchy should be attained; and take into account social, environmental, and health issues; and that the RCBC board call on the Ministry to use the Precautionary Principle to establish an acceptable level of the hierarchy in instances where science cannot provide a high degree of certainty.”

**Container Recycling Fees** – Approved January 28, 2005

“RCBC position on CRFs from the year 2000 on CRF be rescinded and a new position developed.”

*Background:*

*In a March 13, 2000 Position Paper on Encorp Pacific’s New Recycling Fees, RCBC came out against the use of visible fees and cited lack of accountability, lack of consultation and lack of consumer education as reasons to oppose the implementation of these. In addition, the Position Paper recommended that Encorp should suspend the Recycling Fees (at least temporarily), provide effective consumer education, and discontinue the practice of displaying the fees on the receipts.*

**EPR and Packaging** – Approved December 12, 2006

“RCBC recommends that all products covered in the Recycling Regulation include associated packaging and that RCBC Communicate through the Hotline, news releases, media, and speak on the issue to the public at large to educate on it.”

**EPR for Packaging** – Approved January 26, 2007

*“That RCBC support the recommendation by outlining the benefits in reduction of bulky packaging in local waste systems and the economic spin-offs (recycling market development in BC, local business opportunities and community economic development, and better packaging design).*

Whereas:

- RCBC supports the Minister's stated goal that ultimately EPR will be applied to all product and packaging discards, ensuring relief for local governments from the burden of managing these discards;
- RCBC supports the Ministry's EPR principle of maintaining a "level playing field" so that no one business gains a market advantage over another by avoiding environmental responsibility;
- RCBC understands that any changes that affect a business's ability to compete in the marketplace can be detrimental not only to the business but also to the overall economy;
- There are several studies underway, by the Local Government Stewardship Council, the CCME, and the GVRD, to review discards and identify possible candidates for EPR;
- Packaging as a category is ubiquitous, huge and complex, with thousands of brand-owners and their packaging suppliers competing for market shares;
- In 2000 RCBC coordinated a multi-stakeholder study of rigid plastic containers that identified plastic bottles used for soaps, cleaners, and detergents to be low-hanging recyclable fruit with significant volumes going to landfill/incineration as well as recycling at public expense;
- There are relatively small number of major brand-owners of soaps, cleaners, and detergents;
- These brand-owners could be called to the table to develop a stewardship Plan, either individually or through a Stewardship Group;
- That an EPR program for this class of packaging would not foreclose on additional programs that might be recommended through the CCME, GVRD, and LGSC studies;
- RCBC is a multi-sectoral organization whose members demonstrate the ability to provide information and support in publicizing the addition of a new class of containers to BC's EPR regulation;
- RCBC's President and Executive Director recently met with Ministry staff and received indications that the Ministry wants to work with RCBC to continue supporting BC's leadership in EPR and the Zero Waste Challenge;

RCBC recommends to add all packaging from household and industrial detergents and cleaning products as a schedule to the Recycling Regulation represents a first step towards achieving the goal of adding all packaging as schedules to the Recycling Regulation, requiring brand-owners to submit a Stewardship Plan using any preferred options (ADF, recycled content, deposits, etc.) or combinations and variations to achieve a 75% recovery and recycling rate; That the recommendation be copied to the CCME for consideration at a national level”

**New EPR Products-** Approved October 26, 2007

“RCBC recommends the inclusion of mercury containing products along with soaps, cleaners, and detergents as new products under the Recycling Regulation.”

**By Application Approach to EPR** – Approved January 25, 2008

“RCBC adopt a position to endorse a 'by application' approach towards the diversion of general WHEREAS 'application groups' who would carry out this EPR initiative are defined as those industry stewards who produce competing products.”

**EPR for Packaging Announcement** – Approved March 28, 2008

“The Recycling Council of BC recommends to the Minister that the occasion of this symposium (Metro Vancouver International Symposium on Packaging – “Next Steps for Packaging Waste Management” on May 28/29, 2008) be the opportunity to announce British Columbia’s intent to add soaps, cleaners and detergents to the Recycling Regulation requiring producers (brand-owners ) to develop and submit a stewardship plan for collecting and recycling their packaging, with the understanding that the government will also consider, at the industry’s request, introducing a level-playing field regulation requiring the use of recycled content in this packaging application.”

**Waste to Energy Facilities** – Approved September 19, 2008

“RCBC adopts a position that 1) is opposed to the development of new waste-to-energy disposal facilities – including bioreactors and incinerators (mass-burn, pyrolysis, plasma, gasification and any other conversion technology) as they inhibit/prevent/restrict the development of Zero Waste programs and facilities aimed at the reduction, reuse, recycling and composting of discarded products and materials and 2) asserts mixed municipal solid waste should not be considered a “clean,” “renewable” or “carbon-neutral” source of energy.”

**A Call to Action** – Approved September 19, 2008

“RCBC endorses “A Call To Action – 12 Priority Policies Needed Now” from the report titled *Stop Trashing the Climate* (available at: <http://www.stoptrashingthecolimate.org/keyfindingdandpolicies.pdf>)”

**Climate Action Plan** – Approved September 19, 2008

“RCBC endorses the plan’s three preventative goals to reduce GHG emissions from waste:

- Keeping organic waste out of landfills: *the Plan supports the efforts of 9 of the province’s 27 regional districts to “keep organic material out, diverting it instead to home and community composting.”*
- Composting: *the Plan promises that “new strategies will be introduced to use organic waste to build soils in gardens and on farms.”*
- Stopping waste at the source: *the Plan makes reference to BC’s EPR programs “to make manufacturers more responsible for the packaging and other waste created by their products.”*

But to ensure that the Climate Action Plan has its intended effect, RCBC recommends the following

modifications to the plan:

-Add the 12 Priority Policies from the “Stop Trashing the Climate Report” to the action items for waste in Appendix A of the plan and assign the appropriate funding to enable these actions. (The present plan has few meaningful and no funded actions as it stands).

- For the one proposed goal in the Plan that gives encouragement to waste practices that focus on energy production at the expense of material recycling and composting:

- *“Exploring opportunities for turning wastes into energy before they reach our landfills will continue to be a key priority, as will reducing the greenhouse gases generated by moving waste from one place to another.”* that this goal is removed as it is not compatible with the ultimate goal of reducing GHG.”

**EPR Program for Packaging** – Approved September 19, 2008

“RCBC recommend that the province, without delay, pass legislation to require an EPR program for all packaging as defined in the Environment Management Act and phase in implementation based on environmental impact including energy savings, landfill space, and manageable product categories.”

**Single Use Bags** – Approved December 5, 2008

“It is the Recycling Council of B.C.’s position that the issue of single-use shopping bags should be addressed through the B.C. Recycling Regulation, which would hold producers responsible for managing these products throughout their entire life cycle.

The objective of this program should be to shift away from single-use shopping bags and encourage reusable options whenever possible, with the remaining quantity of single use bags collected and recycled through an Extended Producer Responsibility program.

- An excessive quantity of single-use shopping bags are generated in the province of B.C.
- The extraction and production of the material to manufacture single-use bags acts as another major source of greenhouse gas emissions
- Responsibility has largely fallen upon municipalities and taxpayers to collect and dispose of single-use shopping bags
- Many local governments in B.C. are considering applying bans, taxes and other regulatory tools available to them to reduce the quantity of single-use bags generated within their jurisdictions
- These policies have the potential to drive positive change and encourage senior levels of government and the private sector to tackle the issue of single-use bags
- Many private sector stakeholders have voluntarily agreed to reduce the quantity of single-use bags that are distributed within their stores
- The combination of local government and private sector initiatives, while positive, creates a multi-jurisdictional patchwork of programs that are confusing to both producers and consumers
- Any solution needs to focus on all single-use bags and material types (plastic, paper, biodegradable etc.) and not favor any one material type over the others.”

**Zero Waste Definition** – Approved December 5, 2008

RCBC adopts the ZWIA definition of zero waste as follows:

‘Zero Waste is a goal that is both pragmatic and visionary, to guide people to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are resources for others to use. Zero Waste means designing and managing products and processes to reduce the volume and toxicity of waste and

materials, conserve and recover all resources, and not burn or bury them. Implementing Zero Waste will eliminate all discharges to land, water or air that may be a threat to planetary, human, animal or plant health.”

**Extended Producer Responsibility Framework Principles** – Approved January 2010

- 1.) Waste Reduction Hierarchy** - Programs must illustrate a commitment to following the 3R waste reduction hierarchy and to achieving the highest, best use for collected materials through demonstrated continuous environmental improvement
- 2.) Level Playing Field** - Policies and regulations must apply to all producers within a designated category, both domestic and imported, with no de minimis provisions, including products purchased online
- 3.) Results Based Evaluation** - Program success should be evaluated by government and the public based on results-based performance standards determined by measurable objectives and not through prescriptive requirements, allowing producers flexibility to design programs
- 4.) Product Categories** - The Recycling Regulation should apply to easily defined product categories and producers should be responsible for the environmentally sound management of their products and all associated packaging
- 5.) Phased Approach** – Government should bring new product categories under regulation allowing for implementation by groups of brand owners with similar products that provide adequate time for producers, local governments and the public to prepare for the transition to EPR
- 6.) Producer Pays** - Producers must be responsible for all program costs associated with EPR services for products covered by the legislation, with no financial share borne by the taxpayer
- 7.) Open Competition** – Stewards should be encourage to provide a level playing field to existing companies on a competitive basis
- 8.) Transparency** – Information in the public interest related to program financing and the management of recovered products and/or materials should be transparent and accessible
- 9.) Visible Fees** - Visible fees should be neither required nor prohibited. The decision to internalize program costs in the price of a product should be solely that of producers and/or retailers
- 10.) Design for Environment** - Producers must demonstrate an adequate effort in DFE to eliminate or reduce the environmental impacts of products and their packaging throughout their lifecycle
- 11.) Public Access** – Stewardship programs must provide reasonable access to collection services
- 12.) Public Awareness** – Producers should be able to demonstrate and report polling data demonstrating adequate levels of awareness of the program among affected sectors
- 13.) Financial Sustainability**– Programs should be adequately funded and financially stable to ensure the delivery of requisite levels of service, public access and collection.