



Issue at a glance:
**Increasing Industrial,
Commercial, and
Institutional Waste
Diversion**

The details

The Provincial Context:

As part of Ontario's transition to the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework by January 1, 2026, Circular Materials will be assuming responsibility for residential recyclable waste collection across the province. While this transition is expected to greatly increase the effectiveness of the residential recycling program, waste from industrial, commercial, and institutional sources (IC&I) sources is excluded from this framework, and will not be eligible for public collection.

Municipalities in Ontario have traditionally provided curbside recycling collection service to small IC&I properties, taking advantage of shared waste collection routes and waste bins with residential properties. With no legislative requirements to separate waste, and the end of municipal recycling collection, these small IC&I properties will be left with no viable options or incentives to continue recycling.

The majority of waste disposed in Ontario landfills currently comes from IC&I sources. It is estimated that Ontario only has 10 years of remaining landfill capacity—a number that is likely to get smaller as our population continues to grow—making it essential that we find ways to divert valuable waste materials from IC&I sources.

The Guelph Context:

The City of Guelph provides curbside garbage and recycling collection services to over 450 commercial and institutional customers, including downtown restaurants and shops. These properties generate approximately 9 per cent of the recyclable materials in Guelph, representing 2,500 loads per year delivered to our waste management site.

If these properties wish to continue recycling after the transition to EPR, they would have to contract private collection services at their own expense, and ensure that their waste is segregated in separate containers from residential material. This would:

1. Be more costly from capital and operating perspectives for the IC&I properties,
2. Create operating inefficiencies with two separate waste collection services providing service to the same locations,
3. Require more indoor and outdoor space for additional bin storage within valuable downtown land
4. Be difficult to enforce for municipal bylaw departments and Circular Materials contract administrators.

If no action is taken to enhance producer responsibility policies, up to 9 per cent of the recyclable waste generated in Guelph will no longer be eligible for collection and will likely be landfilled.

The City of Guelph calls on the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to modernize policies and regulations for the diversion of Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional (IC&I) waste, and act on the recommendations outlined in the Association of Municipalities of Ontario 2023 Baseline Waste & Recycling Report.

The benefits



Responsible use of the limited remaining landfill capacity in Ontario



Streamlined waste collection and reduced regulatory conflict in downtowns and other civic areas.



Recovery of valuable materials for re-use in the Circular Economy



Creation of value-adding jobs in the materials recovery sector.

Key facts



10 years of landfill capacity remaining in Ontario



9–12 million tonnes of waste disposed per year in Ontario, of which roughly 1/3 is shipped to the US.



75–80 per cent of all waste landfilled in Ontario in 2022 came from IC&I sources



Policies to divert IC&I waste could help divert an additional 1.8 million tonnes of organic waste and 1.24 million tonnes of paper and packaging from landfill

Why this is important

Ontario is transitioning to the Extended Producer Responsibility recycling framework, however, recyclable materials from industrial, commercial and institutional (IC&I) sources continue to be excluded as eligible collection sources. While larger IC&I properties have agreements in place with third-party waste collection services to fulfill their legislated recycling obligations, smaller properties will be left with no viable options or incentives to continue recycling.

As Ontario's waste disposal sites rapidly approach full capacity, Ontario's municipalities need urgent solutions to increase the waste diversion rate across the industrial, commercial and institutional sectors.



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