

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF MOUNT WADDINGTON



REPORT

**TO:** Chair and Directors **FILE NO. 315.04**

**FROM:** Patrick Donaghy, Operations Manager

**SUBJECT:** Packaging Material and Printed Paper Stewardship Program

**DATE:** November 7, 2011

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At the 2011 Coast Waste Management Association's conference in Victoria, the Ministry of Environment and a representative of Multi Material BC (MMBC), the consortium of all the producers of packaging material and printed paper led an information session on a new product stewardship program which is scheduled to be active as of May 2014. The intent of this new program is to make the producers of all packaging material and written paper (books are exempted) responsible for its diversion from the waste stream in British Columbia. The Circulation Package document titled "*Packaging and Printed Paper, New Stewardship Responsibilities in British Columbia*" provides an overview of the program.

The impact of this initiative on the management of solid waste will be immense both at the local and regional level. The Regional District of Mount Waddington and its communities, both incorporated and unincorporated must assess and plan around its implications immediately to maximize the potential benefits and mitigate adverse consequences. The following paper attempts to communicate the Manager of Operations' initial assessments and will be followed by further reports as additional implications are perceived.

The key points are as follows:

- Local governments will no longer be involved in the diversion of packaging material and printed paper other than in the following areas:
  - providing facilities or operational services as a service provider at a landfill or other local site for product collection or processing;
  - helping to inform the public that the stewardship program is available;
  - assisting the producer or agency with local land use and business licence issues relating to collection and processing facilities;
  - imposing bans on the landfilling of the relevant products when appropriate.
- Responsibility for diverting packaging material and printed paper will lie solely with the producers
- Packaging is defined in the Environmental Management Act as "a material, substance or object that is (a) used to protect, contain or transport a commodity or product, or (b) attached to a commodity or product or its container for the purpose of marketing or communicating information about the commodity or product". Printed paper is defined in the Recycling

Regulation and includes all paper printed with text or graphics (e.g., newspapers, flyers, phone-books) with the exception of bound books).

- ICI (Institutional, Commercial, Industrial) material does not seem to be exempt from this program but there is uncertainty regarding whether the actual collection at these premises is covered so a local government collection site may be required.
- All communities will receive some level of collection service. As a general principle, if the community currently has curbside collection, it will likely continue to receive it. The type of collection service in each community will be an important consultation issue for local governments and private individuals when industry solicits stakeholder input on its draft stewardship plan.
- The initial consultation phase has just started and will extend into 2012. The Province has set a deadline for the first draft of the stewardship plan to be submitted by late 2012. The RDMW needs to participate in the consultation phase and monitor the stewardship plan's development to maximize the program's benefits.
- To fund this program province wide, it is likely that Producers will develop some means to recover the cost of the collection and diversion of the packaging material and printed paper. This cost recovery maybe visible to the consumer in the form of a "eco-fee" but given the experience in Ontario recently, the cost recovery mechanism maybe buried in the price.

Any material that escapes this stewardship program in the RDMW will cost residents two fold for its disposal, first by the Producer's cost recovery mechanism and second through the cost of the local service collection and the regional solid waste fees. To avoid this double cost scenario, an effective region wide diversion program needs to be established in parallel to the Producer's stewardship program. Failure to establish this diversion program would mean that the RDMW households will be subsidizing communities with more effective programs. It must be stressed that a highly effective diversion program would be paid for by producers as of May 2014 and not local government should the stewardship program become operational.

Questions that need to be addressed within the RDMW's communities are as follows:

- Do the participants within the solid waste sector working within the RDMW have the ability to participate in this new program in 2014? If the North Island does not prepare adequately, local jobs in both the public and private sectors will be lost and exported to the south.
- Waste collection could be radically changed with significant cost implications for municipal and local services. Should all the packaging material and printed paper be removed from the waste stream, the volume of waste generated by businesses and households will shrink to far less than 50%. Does weekly collection make sense?
- The majority of the material left in the waste stream once packaging and printed paper has been removed will be organics such as food waste. Does it make sense to continue to landfill this material when it can be composted? With no organics or packaging materials to landfill, 7MLRC's life expectancy will be extended by decades including the recent infrastructure work done in 2009-2010. The Phase 3 landfill expansion could be re tasked as a composting area so the past investment could provide a better return to the RDMW.
- By not having a diversion collection program that emphasizes maximizing tonnage, the RDMW's communities could be trapped with a lower calibre level of service. The current strategy was to target materials that can be managed easily with the best environmental impact and cost effectiveness. This is a sound strategy for present conditions when local government

has sole responsibility but with the producers being accountable this outlook needs to be re-examined.

In conclusion, these changes in solid waste management will come into effect around May 2014. The decisions about what will happen will be made far earlier with consultation having just started.

If any member of the Board should have any questions please contact me at your convenience.

Respectfully submitted

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Patrick Donaghy PEng, MSc  
Manager of Operations