

2009-2010 Annual Report

Dear Valued RCO Member,

Waste generation and resource conservation continue to be priorities on the environmental consciousness of Ontarians. Statistics Canada's 2008 Waste Management Industry survey stated the waste generation rate at just over 1,000 kg per person, virtually unchanged from 2006. The survey also estimates the costs to manage wastes increased from \$2.1 billion in 2006 to \$2.6 billion in 2008. Clearly responsible production and sustainable consumption are the only ways to solve our waste problem.

RCO upheld its commitment to lead Ontario toward its goal of zero waste. This past year has been one of continued growth for existing and new programs and services. Maintaining its focus on driving improvement of diversion in the non-residential sector, RCO began to develop one of the most significant initiatives in decades: a diversion certification program for the Industrial, Commercial and Institutional sector. When launched this program will provide generators the opportunity to have RCO audit and verify their waste diversion claims against the programs set standards. The intent is to recognize best practices and support the IC&I community with standardized resources and tools.

RCO's policy work focused on the improvements and expansion of Ontario's stewardship programs—engaged fully in the Province's recent review of the *Waste Diversion Act*. Several broad policy-based workshops were also hosted to explore issues like compostable packaging, and disposal bans and levies.

RCO continues to work to serve its members: providing opportunities to share information, recognizing best practices, facilitating market and business opportunities, as well as supporting members 'on the ground' to help them achieve their waste reduction goals. We would like to thank all of our members and supporters who recognize the importance of our role and make investments to ensure that Ontario continues to have a strong advocate for waste reduction.

Jo-Anne St. Godard
Executive Director

POLICY FOCUS: In 2009, RCO focused on the review of the *Waste Diversion Act (WDA)*, specifically the Ministry of the Environment's report *From Waste to Worth: The Role of Waste Diversion in the Green Economy and the Review of the Waste Diversion Act*. RCO participated in many of the Ministry's stakeholder sessions and hosted its own consultation event in conjunction with its 2008 Annual General meeting. An excerpt taken directly from RCO's formal written comments is reproduced on page 4. →

RCO Mission Statement

The Recycling Council of Ontario believes that society must minimize its impact on the environment by eliminating waste. To that end, our mission is to inform and educate all members of society about the generation of waste, the avoidance of waste, the more efficient use of resources and the benefits and/or consequences of these activities.



Recycling
Council of
Ontario

Operational Highlights 2009/2010

Operations

Membership/Communications

Policy

Waste Diversion Act Review

Programs

3RCertified — **NEW PROGRAM!**

Ontario Waste Minimization Awards

Take Back the Light

Waste Reduction Week in Canada ('09)



Operations: Membership/Communications

The RCO's diverse membership base continued to grow throughout 2009/2010. Our commitment to ensuring superlative ROI for membership dollars is the cornerstone of our membership strategy. We received a tremendous boost from the faith and support of our members during the economic downturn and for that we are extremely grateful. Thank you! Building on work begun in 2008-09, we focused on boosting our online resources, fine-tuning the daily news summary, *RCO Hillites the Headlines*, and increasing the quantity and quality of

our Special Bulletins on environmental and policy matters. We worked hard to have a comprehensive, flexible and up-to-date web presence. Eventually all of RCO's online resources (main site and all program sites) will be housed under one umbrella for consistency and efficiency. Plans for 2009-2010 include major upgrades of the main RCO website, to enhance our opportunities for profiling our members and promoting our shared mandate. In 2010 RCO also dived into the world of Social Media to better connect with our various audiences. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!

RCO continued to receive daily inquiries from residents and businesses looking for answers to complex diversion questions – an excellent sign of engagement with our 3Rs messaging.

3RCertified

In 2009-10 RCO focused significant resources and efforts conceptualizing a certification program to recognize and verify diversion claims of the ICI sector.

Late in 2010, RCO received funding for the program from the Ontario Ministry of the Environment.

Development is now well underway and the program is on track to launch in early May 2011.



About 3RCertified

What is the purpose of this program?

To provide credible, public recognition to those businesses and institutions which have made a meaningful commitment toward achieving the following environmental goals:

- Reducing the amount of solid waste generated
- Implementing effective and sustainable waste reduction processes and procedures
- Committing to ongoing performance measurement and improvement in the area of solid waste diversion

Why is recognition important?

It will provide an incentive for businesses and institutions to increase waste-diversion rates and adopt best practices with respect to implementing 3Rs practices. It will allow consumers and end-users to identify and support those businesses and institutions that have made a serious commitment to manage their solid waste responsibly. As an independent body with strong environmental credentials, RCO is uniquely qualified to act as an objective third-party evaluator to verify and validate organizations' claims of waste-diversion performance. Better 3Rs results across the ICI sector will be achieved through the identification and sharing of best practices. Outstanding performers will be recognized as 3R Champions. Certification to the WDCP standard will be a point of pride, and the end result will be less solid waste sent to Ontario landfill sites.

How will WDCP certification be awarded?

It is anticipated that the central feature of the WDCP certification process will be a comprehensive onsite evaluation of each participating organization's waste management policies, procedures and processes. Compliance will be measured against objective performance standards and criteria to be established by industry-leading subject matter experts in partnership with RCO and key stakeholders from businesses and institutions across Ontario. The standards and criteria will support and reinforce the applicable provisions of all provincial legislation related to waste diversion and recycling. Participating businesses and institutions meeting the prescribed performance standards will receive WDCP certification, with different levels of certification indicating differentiated performance standards, e.g. Gold, Silver and Bronze certification.

Ontario Waste Minimization Awards

This program continued to grow in 2009 with 101 registered applicants (a 47% increase from 2007). The growth category continued to be Facility Management. However a small differentiation emerged in the business grouping with more organizations defining themselves as “sustainable product or service” companies, which we believe will be a future trend as business strives to be more sustainable and sensitive to the eco-sensibilities of the consumer.

This 2009/2010 reporting year saw a revamping of the awards criteria that demanded greater rigour in the responses provided. The entire program was enhanced by new mechanics by which companies applied and judges evaluated. A database format was implemented and, for the first time, the RCO proclaimed a “paperless process”. These strides in our own continuous improvement have streamlined the process for all stakeholders. Another first was an awards video compiled to provide a visual representation of our applicants’ activities and to entertain the gala guests. This new feature gave a professional polish to the event and was very well received.

Thank you to our 2009 Awards Sponsors: [Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Waste Management, The Beer Store, Menkes, GEEP, Ontario Electronic Stewardship, Desnoyers Schuler Inc., c-Seven Media, Custom Art Concepts](#)

Waste Reduction Week 2009

RCO, Chair of the National Steering Committee for Waste Reduction Week (WRW) in Canada, once again led Canada’s 13 provinces and territories in the delivery of the **2009 Waste Reduction Week Program**. At the heart of the program are the dual objectives of educating Ontarians about the environmental consequences related to waste, while providing information and resources to help them take action and reduce wastes they generate in their own daily living.

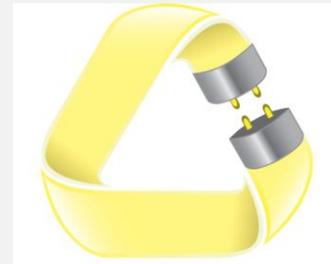
The WRW Program focuses on 3 targeted audiences: schools, local governments and businesses. Waste Reduction Week in Canada 2009 saw schools, municipalities, businesses, organizations and individuals across Ontario register to take action to reduce their waste. Program highlights for the 2009 include:

- Information packages mailed to 1000s of schools, businesses and communities
- 2 million Facebook visitors (150 per day)
- 373 registered public events (up 40% from previous years)
- 58 Municipal proclamations
- 56,000 visits to the website during the campaign

Thank you to our WRW National 2009 Sponsors: [Hewlett Packard, Loblaw Companies Limited, MacDonald’s Restaurants of Canada, Nestlé Waters Canada, Staples Canada Inc.](#)

Take Back The Light

It is estimated that only 7% of the over 35 million fluorescent lamps sold in Ontario (in the industrial, commercial and institutional sectors) each year are recovered and properly recycled. It is paramount that we ensure these lamps are recycled as they contain valuable resources including toxic mercury. **Take Back the Light**, launched in June 2008, was created as a program to bring awareness to and provide a market-based approach to fluorescent lamp recycling.



TAKE BACK THE LIGHT

09-10 Program Highlights

At the end of the 2009-2010 fiscal year **over 1.5 million lamps** had been recycled.

All of the lamps recovered by participants of distributors, retrofitters and buyers of Take Back the Light were recycled to approximately 98% of their original component materials.

The Lamp Standard, the TBTL quarterly newsletter, was launched in the Spring of 2010.

Development of an extensive database to support the program got underway with tracking and online registration features as key components.



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*RCO... Working toward Eliminating
Waste in 2010/2011*

Find us on the Web:
www.rco.on.ca



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Sarah Mills, *Program Manager, Take Back the Light; Manager, Special Projects*

Emma Rogers, *Special Projects Coordinator*

Considering it the most effective mechanism to reduce wastes, RCO will continue to advocate for and entrench producer responsibility policies and programs in Ontario.

Policy (continued from page 1)

"The Minister's Report on the WDA Act 2002 Review, *From Waste to Worth: the Role of Waste Diversion in the Green Economy*, offers a holistic approach to improving the regulatory framework that will expand and improve waste reduction in Ontario. For decades stakeholders have been requesting that Government take a leadership role by reviewing all its current policies and programs that affect waste generation and management. In June 2004, the Ministry of the Environment released a discussion paper that followed a lengthy consultation, which outlined 9 priorities that when implemented would support Ontario's provincial waste diversion goal of 60%. Many of the proposed directions in this newly released Minister's report echo and expand on those original priorities. The concepts of full producer responsibility, expansion of regulatory tools, resources directed to the Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (IC&I) sector and the introduction of supporting measures, such as disposal levies and bans, along with long-term, strategic planning will move Ontario forward as a waste reduction leader.

The report also provides important clarity that environmental protection through waste prevention and resource recovery through recycling offer important foundations from which to build Ontario's green economy. It also suggests a necessary shift in Ontario's waste diversion framework to ensure a focus on environmental outcomes, facilitating full accounting of materials management and their economic and environmental impacts from cradle-to-cradle. The report's proposition to reassign waste prevention and management to producers is a pivotal shift from Ontario's current focus on waste management and recovery. This reassignment transitions the economic and environmental burdens of waste from taxpayers (municipalities) to producers, who are best positioned to affect prevention.

The Minister's report also proposes to introduce supporting measures that are intended to address the economic disparities between disposal and diversion activities. This direction will attract new investments in diversion infrastructure and programming. Disposal levies and bans integrate important polluter pays principles and provide much needed focus on waste generators in the IC&I sector. These measures, along with the proposed changes to the WDA framework, mirror the approaches that have been taken in other jurisdictions that have achieved the best waste diversion results."

In our review, we offered direction in the following key areas:

1. The province needs a long term strategy that systematically deals with waste issues. This broader strategy needs to articulate specific goals, based on environmental outcomes, define targets and the activities to reach them.
2. Move towards outcomes-based producer responsibility programs. Ensure that producers are 100% responsible for the full cost; targeting the obligation to individual stewards; facilitating competition to build innovate, effective and efficient programs.
3. Broaden the scope of the obligation to include materials generated in the IC&I Sector.
4. Ensure that the programs performance measures are based on the highest environmental outcomes/standards.
5. Introduce consequences for non performance.
6. Introduce disposal bans and levies to support the regulated programs.