

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lack of Recycling Targets for Specific Consumer Products and Packaging is Filling Up Our Landfills, says EPR Canada

(September 4, 2014) – Industry funded and operated recycling programs are growing in numbers throughout Canada but the lack of government-mandated recycling targets by specific category for end-of-life consumer products such as electronics, household hazardous waste and packaging and printed papers masks underperformance when it comes to recycling recovery rates for many of those materials, according to a report released today by Extended Producer Responsibility Canada (EPRC).

The report says that while provincial governments have been passing more extended producer responsibility (EPR) legislation requiring industry to take over responsibility for recovering their products and packaging for recycling when consumers no longer have use for them, the legislation often either lacks targets entirely or applies an aggregate target across the entire group of products, meaning that a low recovery rate of some products and materials can hide behind the better performance of other materials.

“For example, while packaging and printed paper programs have generic recovery targets for recycling in the range of 60% to 75% for all categories aggregated together, the range of performance for individual products or packaging materials is highly variable with recovery rates for some materials reaching highs of over 90% and others achieving rates as low as 20%. The consequence is that some industry sectors are not being held to recovery standards and perhaps are not as driven to recover their products and packaging for recycling as they would be if they had to comply with a specific material category recovery target,” said Duncan Bury, EPRC co-founder.

“Specific recovery targets for individual material types such as printers in electronics recycling or aseptic containers, e.g., drinking boxes, in packaging would lead to industry sharpening their recycling policies and plans and striving harder to keep more secondary resources out of our landfills,” Bury added.

The report entitled [2013 Extended Producer Responsibility \(EPR\) Progress Summary](#) is the third annual review of EPR policies, programs and practices undertaken by Canada’s federal, provincial and territorial governments. In the first two years, EPRC produced a report card describing and scoring the progress each jurisdiction achieved measured against its commitment to comply with the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment’s Canada-wide Action Plan on Extended Producer Responsibility. The first report card, released in 2012, EPRC awarded the highest score to British Columbia. In 2013, British Columbia and Quebec tied for head of the class.

This year, in recognition that developing EPR policies and programs takes time, EPRC decided to produce a summary of the state of progress in enacting EPR policies and programs in each government jurisdiction across Canada. The report is posted on EPRC’s website at www.eprcanada.ca. The next fully scored report card covering 2014 will be released at the Canadian Stewardship Conference in Banff in October, 2015. To produce the previous years’ report cards and this year’s progress summary, EPRC polls the federal, provincial and territorial governments. The scored report cards involve distribution of a detailed questionnaire.

EPR Canada assesses and grades each jurisdiction based on their response to the questions which reflect best practices for the development and implementation of EPR policies and programs under three categories:

- **Commitment** – indicators that each government, as a member of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) is following through on its commitment to adopt the principles of extended producers responsibility in compliance with the CCME Canada-wide Action Plan on EPR, and is developing EPR policies and programs
- **Implementation** – examples of how each government is implementing policies and practices to support producer performance
- **Accountability** – indicators that each government has mechanisms in place to measure and report on producer performance

When the 2012 survey questionnaire was distributed, EPR Canada introduced a progressive weighting of the scores assigned to each category to acknowledge the important evolution of EPR in Canada from stewardship to partial EPR and then full EPR. Stewardship programs involve government roles in designing, operating and paying for programs while producers pay none or part of the costs. Full EPR involves having producers design, operate and finance end-of-life product and packaging programs.

The 2013 Progress Summary is the third of five annual ratings that EPR Canada is producing and publishing.

Over the remaining two years of the report card, commitment will earn fewer points and implementation and accountability will earn more as governments make progress in the development of EPR programs.

The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) defines extended producer responsibility as a policy approach in which a producer's responsibility, physical and/or financial, for a product is extended to the post-consumer stage of a product's life cycle, shifting it away from municipalities and regional waste authorities. It also encourages producers to incorporate environmental considerations in the design of their products. In a [Progress Report on the Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility](#) that CCME released in August 2014, it noted that since the adoption of the Action Plan, "nine out of ten provinces have legislated EPR programs or requirements and the number of product categories covered by legislated EPR programs or requirements, both in effect or soon to be, has almost tripled."

EPR Canada is a not-for-profit organization formed in 2011 by seven like-minded Canadians who have been involved in EPR policies and programs since they first began to take hold in this country in the 1990s. The goal of EPR Canada is to foster continued growth and improvement of EPR policies, programs and practices in Canada. Additional information about EPR Canada can be found on its website, www.eprcanada.ca

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[Communiquez avec Duncan Bury pour obtenir le communiqué en français.](#)

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