



LANDFILL BANS

INTRODUCTION

In the past, items that had outlived their usefulness were tossed in the trash. Today discarded chemicals, heavy metals and other hazardous wastes are showing up in ground water and throughout the food chain. One way to address these issues and reduce our reliance on dwindling landfill capacities is the use of material bans. Disposal bans on specific classes of materials can be part of an effective waste reduction and pollution prevention strategy. When combined with other measures bans can effectively remove toxic and hazardous materials from the solid waste stream and divert recyclables and products collected under industry stewardship programs to the appropriate facilities.

OBJECTIVE OF LANDFILL BANS

- To reduce the amount of material going to landfills, thereby reducing the transportation of waste and extending the life of the landfill
- To reduce the need for new landfills / disposal facilities
- To reduce the quantity of material to be handled by municipalities and thus the associated costs
- To support jobs in the BC's rapidly expanding recycling industry
- To prevent environmental degradation from toxic and hazardous materials
- To increase participation in initiatives to reduce waste and reach goals such as increasing waste diversion rates to 70%

Bans are not effective as a stand-alone measure. Rather they need to be part of a multi-tool approach, combined with other policies and mechanisms to support the process as whole.

ALTERNATE STREAMS AND PROGRAMS

People still need easy alternatives to dispose of banned materials or abandonment and illegal dumping will occur. Bans should only be implemented after well-established and easily accessible options exist in order to avoid dumping. Mechanisms such as one-stop-drop recycling depots or expanded curbside recycling programs make participation more convenient and help facilitate the recycling process.

◆ COMPOSTABLE ORGANICS

Compostable organics can account for as much as forty percent of the solid waste stream. Promoting backyard composting and providing programs such as green curbside bins can effectively reduce waste when coupled with bans.

◆ STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS

Consumer items such as electronics, paint, motor oil and pharmaceuticals are regulated by product stewardship programs at a provincial level. The manufacturers of these products are responsible for collecting and recycling their products responsibly. By banning these items, municipalities can help divert materials to the designated collection programs that are already in place.

◆ PUBLIC EDUCATION

Compliance has a greater chance of success if the public is well informed. They should be made aware of any disposal bans as well as the reasons for the policy. Residents should also be informed about what alternatives exist for recycling or disposal. Support infrastructure such as RCBC's Recycling Hotline provide information and can play an important role in the process.

◆ ZERO WASTE

Zero Waste means looking at new ways to decrease the amount of waste we produce and maximize the reuse and recycling of waste by turning it into new resources. Over fifty percent of regional districts in BC have adopted Zero Waste targets as an integral part of their solid waste management plans. When combined with landfill bans, a Zero Waste strategy can provide a way to publically promote waste reduction and encompass a variety of regional initiatives.

LANDFILL BANS IN BC

All BC regional districts have banned toxic materials from landfills, and as more recycling options become available more items are being restricted. Metro Vancouver introduced new landfill bans in January of 2008 that cover all curbside recyclables and all products covered by a provincial stewardship program as a means to significantly reduce the waste entering regional landfills. Similar bans are in place in the Nanaimo, Cowichan Valley, Central Okanagan, Capital, and Kitimat-Stikine Regional Districts.

EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT

Bans are only effective if they are enforced. If not, they are no more than a suggested compliance policy. Bans are, however, extremely difficult to enforce when the collected materials are commingled because the banned material cannot always be attributed to the correct waste generator.

There are positive and negative means of implementing bans. In Metro Vancouver fines are issued to waste haulers at the dump site. This method can effectively make its way back to the original waste producers through increased hauling charges. The collection company can also refuse to pick up loads of waste that contain banned materials, again making the producers responsible for complying with the bans. In the Regional District of Kitimat Stikine, "diversion credits" are used as a positive initiative to increase compliance with landfill bans and to reward innovative participation.

Whether measures are punitive or constructive, the effective enforcement of bans is a necessary part of a process to ensure overall success.

DISADVANTAGES

- ◆ If there are no convenient disposal options for banned materials people may resort to other means of disposal which can damage the environment such as burning waste, illegal dumping or exporting waste.
- ◆ Bans can be expensive and difficult, both to manage and enforce.
- ◆ Setting up alternative disposal options, such as recycling programs or household hazardous waste collections can be expensive for municipalities.
- ◆ The cost of landfill bans can be unevenly distributed with an increased burden on businesses who are not provided with municipal recycling pick-up, and to hauling companies who are absorbing the disposal fines rather than the residents who produce the waste.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

The best way to ensure you keep up with the latest developments on bans and other sustainability issues and have your voice heard is to join RCBC. You will receive the latest RCBC publications that explore these issues and more. By being a member of RCBC, whether you are a consumer, a retailer, a recycler or a brand owner, you will become part of the made-in-BC solution that fits our province's waste management objectives as we work together for a sustainable future.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

RCBC: www.rcbc.bc.ca

Ministry of Environment: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/>

GVRD Bans: <http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/recycling-and-garbage/banned-materials.htm>

CRD Bans: <http://www.crd.bc.ca/waste/hartland/prohibited.htm>

OR CALL

RCBC Recycling Hotline at 604-732-9253 or 1-800-667-4321

This document was developed with the assistance of RCBC members representing consumers, industry, government and environmental perspectives.

RCBC Mission Statement

RCBC is a multi-sectoral non-profit organization promoting the principles of Zero Waste through information services, the exchange of ideas and research.

Suite 10 - 119 West Pender Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 1S5
Phone: 604-683-6009
Fax: 604-683-7255
Website: www.rcbc.bc.ca
Email: rcbc@rcbc.bc.ca