



Media Release

For Immediate Release

Harmonization to BC's EPR Policies Could Lead to National Strategy

Vancouver, May 1, 2019 – As a recent three-part series by Global News revealed in its final segment, there is not a nation-wide homogeneous approach to municipal/residential recycling in Canada. In all cases, it's a provincial jurisdiction, in which each province and territory determines its own recycling policies and process. Any discussion of a national strategy should focus on which of those polices has proven to be the most effective, particularly in this changing landscape of access to international markets and the transition domestically to a more circular economy.

Since 1994, British Columbia adopted a more progressive approach to recycling than other parts of Canada. Over that time, almost all B.C.'s residential recycling transitioned to a system managed by the industries that sold those products into the market. B.C.'s Recycling Regulation is based on a principle called extended producer responsibility (EPR) that assigns the management of recycling to those producers. Over the last 25 years, more than two dozen producer-funded programs have emerged to collect and recycle everything from appliances to packaging.

Since 2014, an industry EPR organization known as Recycle BC assumed control of the curbside blue box system, relieving local governments of the cost and management. Due to that holistic province-wide management, Recycle BC streams collected plastics to companies such as Merlin Plastics, where those materials are processed into manufacturer-ready pellets for sale on the international commodity market. Recycle BC ensures a low contamination rate through its system and so still has access to international markets, where collected materials are processed back into packaging or other products.

Due to its approach, B.C. leads North America in EPR programs and policies. This is why on May 9th, the B.C. Ministry of Environment & Climate Change will receive a Recycling Council of B.C. environmental leadership award for establishing those EPR policies 25 years ago. If other jurisdictions had followed its lead, they'd be in a position to more effectively manage recyclable materials and transition towards a sustainable circular economy as B.C. opted to do in 1994. Adopting a harmonized approach based on B.C.'s EPR polices now could provide the basis for an effective national strategy.

-30-

Media Contacts:

Brock Macdonald
Chief Executive Officer, RCBC
Tel: 604-683-6009 ext. 307
Email: brock@rcbc.ca

Harvinder Aujala
Director Policy & Communications, RCBC
Tel: 604-683-6009 ext. 313
Email: harv@rcbc.ca