



# Manitoba's Blue Bin Recycling Transition



Manitoba.ca

Manitoba 

# Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)



EPR is a policy approach in which a producer's responsibility extends to the physical and financial post-consumer management of a product's life cycle. EPR is based on the 'polluter pays' principle.



Stewards, or producer responsibility organizations acting on behalf of stewards, collect designated/regulated end-of-life products from consumers under the authority of a government-approved stewardship program.



Stewards (i.e., manufacturers, distributors, retailers) are responsible for the entire life cycle of their product, including the end-of-life stage.



Collected products are responsibly, sustainably managed (e.g., reused, recycled, safely disposed)

# Benefits of EPR

## 1. Shifts Waste Costs from Taxpayers to Polluters

- Municipalities often bear the cost of waste collection and processing.
- Ensures the companies that profit from a product also pay for its end-of-life management – not the public.

## 2. Drives Eco-Design

- When producers are financially responsible for waste, they are **incentivized to design products** that are: easier to recycle, less toxic, or more durable and reusable.

## 3. Improves Recycling Systems

- EPR-funded programs often have more stable funding, better materials sorting, and higher recycling rates than government-funded systems.
- Programs can be province-wide and standardized, reducing confusion for consumers.

## 4. Enhances Accountability and Data

- Producers must track and report materials, improving data quality.
- Enables governments to set clear targets and penalties for non-compliance.

## 5. Supports Circular Economy Goals

- By internalizing the cost of waste, EPR helps transition toward closed-loop systems, where materials are reused and value is retained.

# EPR Legislation in Manitoba

## Waste Reduction and Prevention Act

- To reduce waste consistent with the principles of sustainable development

### EPR Regulations for designated materials:

Household  
Hazardous  
Material and  
Prescribed  
Material

1 Guideline

Packaging  
and  
Printed  
Paper

2 Guidelines

Tires

1 Guideline

Used Oil,  
Oil Filters  
and  
Containers

1 Guideline

Electric and  
Electronic  
Equipment

1 Guideline

# Financial Model of EPR Programs

Industry stewards pay stewardship organizations to run the EPR programs on their behalf. Industry stewards can choose to manage the additional costs of the designated materials they supply into Manitoba by:



## 1. Charging extra fees at retail check-out

Some stewardship programs add a small **environmental handling fee (EHF)** to the designated material at check-out.

Example: \$0.02-\$0.03 per non-alcoholic, non-flavoured beverage container.

Consumers see a separate fee on their receipt at check-out.

## 2. Imposing membership fees to stewards

Some stewardship programs are financed by membership fees paid by stewards.

Stewards either:

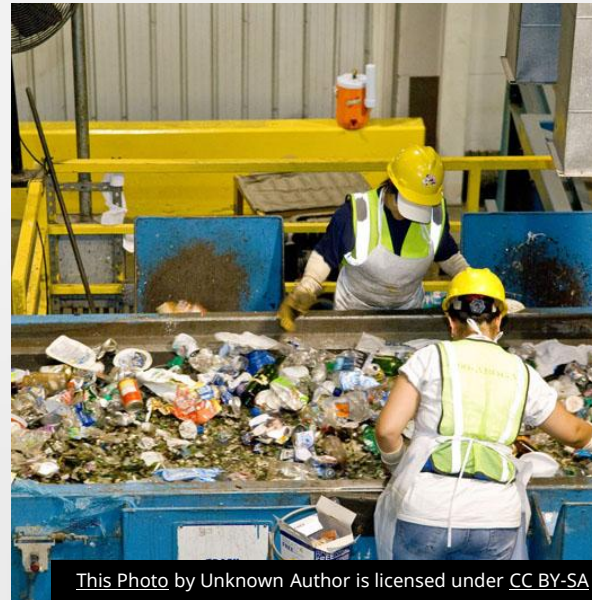
- **absorb the cost into their business model**  
e.g., mercury-containing thermostats
- **or increase the purchase price** of the designated materials they sell  
e.g., most packaging and printed paper (not beverage containers)

Consumers do not see separate fees on their receipt at check-out.

# Cost-Shared vs. Full EPR Model

## Cost-Shared EPR

- Residential packaging and printed paper recycling programs operate under a cost-shared model in Manitoba:
- <80% of costs are covered by industry stewards.
- >20% of costs are covered by municipalities and communities; the Manitoba Government partially offsets these costs by providing \$7M annually in recycling rebates.
- Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec introduced cost-shared models in the 2000s to alleviate part of municipalities' financial burden with waste management services. As of now, only Manitoba has not started a transition to full EPR.



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA

## Full EPR

'Full' EPR makes producers/stewards accountable for the full end-of-life management for their products, including costs.

This includes collection, sorting, material marketing, public education, administration, etc.

Most stewardship programs in Manitoba operate at full EPR.

# Reasons to Transition to Full EPR

- **Higher Waste Diversion Rates** - Increases recycling of blue bin materials thereby reducing the pressure to expand landfills.
- **Circular Economy** - Helps transition the economy from a linear (take-make-dispose) model to a circular economy, where products and materials are kept in use and value is retained.
- **Reduces Longer Term Costs** – Lengthens the lifespan of landfills and reduces associated costs.
- **Lower Greenhouse Gas Emissions** – Supports government’s net zero goal by 2050 through cutting emissions
- **Standardization** – Supports a Manitoba-wide standardized set of accepted blue bin materials
- **Recommendations** – Addresses recommendations for modernizing Manitoba’s waste diversion and recycling programming
- **National and Jurisdictional Alignment** – Follows the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment’s Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste and EPR models for blue bin recycling in other Canadian jurisdictions

# Work Completed and Next Steps

**2021:** At the Department's (ECC) direction, MMSM submitted a draft transition plan to full EPR.

**2022 – 2023:** Department-led public engagement feedback from municipalities on the transition plan identified areas for improvement.

**2024:** The Minister created an advisory committee to identify and co-design enhancements to the transition plan. Committee members included municipalities, industry, environmental organizations, Indigenous organizations and government agencies. The advisory committee worked through several issues with MMSM and came to a consensus on recommended updates to the transition plan.

**2025:** MMSM revised the transition plan based on the committee's feedback and the department's direction. The department and the Advisory Committee reviewed the revised plan.

## Next steps:

- Public engagement on the revised transition plan, as required by the Packaging and Printed Paper Stewardship Regulation.
- The transition plan requires ministerial approval to proceed under the Regulation.
- Following a ministerial decision, an approved plan can be implemented by MMSM.

---

**RecycleMB@gov.mb.ca**

**Kelly Kuryk**

**Manitoba Environment and Climate Change**

**Manitoba.ca**

**Manitoba** 