



## - PRESS RELEASE -

### Paper industry wants old boxes banned from landfill

- *"We want to use them again," says environmental council PPEC* -

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Canada's paper packaging industry wants the Ontario government to ban old corrugated boxes from landfill. Quebec is moving to ban them from landfill next year and the industry wants Ontario to do the same, says PPEC executive director, John Mullinder. A provincial ban would demonstrate political leadership and is legally required to cover both private and publicly-owned landfills, he says. "It's a win-win for everybody, but mainly for the environment."

The council estimates that banning old corrugated containers (or OCC) from Ontario and Quebec landfills would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 85,000 tonnes (or the equivalent of taking 15,000 vehicles off the road).

A provincial ban on OCC would also extend the life of existing Ontario landfills by up to two and a half years, delaying costly measures to find new, always hard-to-site landfills as the current ones rapidly fill. PPEC estimates Ontario and Quebec municipalities will achieve operational cost savings of between \$12 million and \$18 million from such a ban.

"And instead of these used boxes rotting in landfill, we get to use them again," he says. The industry relies heavily on recycled materials (mainly old boxes) to make new boxes, with a national average 82% recycled content. Most of that comes from used boxes collected from the back of supermarkets and factories, but an increasing amount is being sourced from the household Blue Box. The most recent recovery rate for OCC in the Blue Box was 87 per cent. But it's not enough, says the council.

"Ideally, we would like zero packaging waste going to landfill, and if a provincial ban helps us get there, then so be it. But we can't do it by ourselves," says Mullinder. "We need the province to step up and demonstrate leadership in this area. It makes good sense to harmonise with what Quebec is doing."

The council says Nova Scotia achieved major waste diversion gains by banning recyclable materials (including OCC) from landfill several years ago. "We're starting off with OCC here, but clearly other recyclable material streams, and other provinces, could be included down the road. But let's get this one moving first."



The council recognises that, as in Nova Scotia, it takes at least two years for any ban to have a real effect, and that enforcement is crucial. “We suspect that at first more OCC is likely to flow south to the US (which has lower landfill fees), but that before long, waste haulers will have to factor in the increased energy costs of shipping that OCC those greater distances, and then hopefully decide to ship them to an Ontario or Quebec recycling mill instead. Maybe a provincial ban together with a shipping-to-landfill charge at a transfer station is the answer,” says Mullinder, “but somehow we have to make landfilling these perfectly recyclable materials more costly, and recycling them more sustainable. We want those boxes.”

(30)

John Mullinder

Executive Director, PPEC

Telephone: (905) 458-0087

Email: [ppec@ppec-paper.com](mailto:ppec@ppec-paper.com)

Website: [www.ppec-paper.com](http://www.ppec-paper.com)

The Paper & Paperboard Packaging Environmental Council (commonly known as PPEC) is the national trade association representing the Canadian paper packaging industry on environmental issues. Its members include both the mills that produce containerboard, boxboard and kraft paper packaging and the converters who turn this into boxes, bags and cartons.



## Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a corrugated box? A corrugated box is the strong, sturdy box commonly used to ship a wide variety of heavier products such as electronics and fridges worldwide. All corrugated boxes have a wavy layer of medium in the middle to give the box extra strength, and this is what distinguishes corrugated from other paper packaging grades such as boxboard (cereal boxes) which don't require such strength.
2. How much old corrugated ends up in landfills every year? Landfill data is hard to come by. PPEC looked at historical data as far back as the 1996 National Packaging Survey; at packaging consumption and recycling trends over the years; at some select landfill waste audits; and allowed for growth in Canadian GDP and population. Our best estimate for OCC disposed in Ontario and Quebec landfills (circa 2011) is about 340,000 tonnes.
3. What does the old corrugated do in landfill? Nothing. It just degrades over time, giving off greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and the more potent methane. Some major landfills have implemented methane capture.
4. Why does PPEC want Ontario to ban OCC from landfill? Because we want to use those old boxes to help make new boxes, something we've always done. Our recycled content averages 82% so we depend on a regular supply of old boxes to keep the whole paper recycling loop going. Why just leave them to rot in landfill? And frankly, it's the right thing to do. We believe that zero packaging waste is worth trying for, but we don't have the legal authority to ban materials from landfill (the province does).
5. What environmental benefits do you see arising from a ban? Our research estimates that banning OCC from Quebec and Ontario landfills would reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by as much as 85,000 tonnes per year (depending on the extent of methane capture at landfill sites and how effectively the ban is enforced). There would also obviously be reduced solid waste (less OCC ending up in landfills) and reduced use of energy to make new boxes.
6. What's the benefit to the province? Reduced pressure on landfill site identification, approvals and monitoring. Positive impact on jobs whether creating additional jobs or maintaining current ones. A positive story on the environment would be quite welcome politically. There is an opportunity to act in harmony with Quebec.
7. What's the benefit to municipalities? If they own or operate a landfill, a ban will extend its life, reducing costs and taxpayer and voter annoyance. Municipalities using a landfill owned by another municipality or a private company may find a ban challenging but it should be both a revenue generator (from increased recycling revenues) and a cost-saving (because of lower tip fees). Based on Nova Scotia's experience, municipal support for a ban is likely to be slow but supportive.



8. What's the likely impact on landfill owners (municipal and private)? There will be a reduction in material and revenue on an annual basis. On the other hand, they will see the life of the landfill and the revenue stream extended. Extended life of the revenue stream is expected to outweigh the short-term revenue reduction and the costly need to find a new landfill site.
9. What's the likely impact on waste haulers? There's not much difference between transporting waste to a paper recycling mill and a landfill. The difference will be in the distances and places they will haul the materials.
10. Are there similar-type landfill bans elsewhere? Yes. Quebec has announced that it plans to ban OCC from Quebec landfills in 2013. Nova Scotia and PEI already have bans. Various cities and/or regions have landfill bans on OCC (Metro Vancouver, Victoria, Kelowna, and the Okanagan Valley in BC); Davidson, Saskatchewan; Region of Waterloo, Ontario; and Austin, PQ.
11. It's a little bit unusual for the producers of a packaging material to call for a landfill ban on the type of material its own members produce, isn't it? Yes. But it makes sense for all the environmental and economic reasons noted above. We can't do any more on our own. We need the province (or provinces) which do have legal authority over landfills (public and private) to effectively make landfill more expensive so that recycling has a sustainable future.

#### PPEC's 20-year track record of Environmental Leadership:

- Pioneered the composting of waxed corrugated and old boxboard in the 1990s (an alternative to recycling in regions far from recycling mills)
- First in North America to trial and promote the further recycling of old boxboard (today, some 83% of Canadians have access to its recycling)
- First to apply activity-based costing to residential recycling programs (creating a more level playing field between packaging materials)
- Pioneered a Food Packaging Protocol for mills using recycled board (giving confidence to customers using material from residential sources)
- The first paper packaging association in the world whose entire mill membership is now independently third-party certified to internationally recognised "chain-of-custody" standards (responsible sourcing of both virgin and recycled materials).
- First packaging association in Canada to publically call for a landfill ban on the type of material its own members produce.