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Residential recovery of paper packaging estimated at 65 per cent

(25 February, 2011) The residential recovery of paper packaging for recycling has reached an impressive 65% for most Canadians, according to the industry's environmental council (PPEC).

The PPEC study estimated used paper packaging material **actually** sent for recycling by householders. Simply having *access* to a Blue Box-type system was not considered good enough since this doesn't mean a material actually gets sent for recycling, just that it *could* be sent for recycling. And the focus was specifically on residential recovery as opposed to industrial recycling (where old corrugated containers or OCC, for example, is believed to have a recovery rate approaching 85 per cent).

"We chose to focus on the residential stream," says PPEC executive director, John Mullinder, "because of the lack of recent and credible data on industrial packaging recycling, but even then, getting credible residential data was not easy." Some provinces do not collect the applicable data so the council ended up basing its findings on four provinces representing 86% of Canada's population (Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta). The council also had to make certain assumptions on packaging generation and recovery, based on the best available information.

In summary, residential paper packaging recovery for recycling was estimated at 65% (2009 data). Ontario had the highest residential paper packaging recovery rate of the four provinces (at 77%). Corrugated had a higher overall recycling rate (of 75%) than old boxboard (52%). Full details of the study are available at www.ppec-paper.com

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