



Infosheet

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2.1 Newspaper publishers pull out of BC stewardship group: looking at going it alone

The Canadian Newspapers Association (CNA) has resigned from the industry stewardship agency that was set up to plan North America's first 100% industry-pay program for residential packaging and printed paper. Multi-Material British Columbia, chaired by the Retail Council, already has in hand two reports (one on the recycling infrastructure in BC and the second on assessing program management options), and is expected to begin actual program planning very shortly to meet the province's November deadline. The publishers, however, clearly feel the train is going too fast in a direction they are not totally comfortable with, and have commissioned their own study to look at the feasibility of a newspaper recovery program (probably including magazines, catalogues, telephone books and other printed paper).

There is the intriguing possibility that a compromise solution similar to the "Paper Box" approach may eventuate in BC, with all paper fibres (including paper packaging) collected in one stream separate from the container (plastic, glass and metal) stream. PPEC advocated for this in Ontario back in the 1990s. The key difference in BC, however, is that aluminum cans and some other high revenue materials are on deposit (not in the box), making fibre collection and revenues far more crucial to overall program costs.

While this situation is playing out in BC, PPEC just happens to be debunking some of the myths that have attached to the Ontario Blue Box system (and which are perhaps colouring the way some brandowners think): that paper and its revenues are relatively insignificant to the success of the Blue Box. In fact, as you will see from the attached, almost 80% of what's recovered in Ontario's Blue Box is paper of one kind or another, so it is very important. And very significantly, the fibre stream collectively contributed an impressive 60% of total Blue Box material revenues in 2010. The plan is to get this information out to select brandowners and retailers so that they are better informed in their decision-making (in BC and other provinces).

2.2 PPEC cautions against greenwashing

PPEC's comments on plans to "Canadianise" an environmental labelling scheme currently being trialled in the U.S. have been well received by major Canadian brandowners and retailers. PPEC was particularly concerned that the actual recycling of materials (recycling rate) was being confused with consumers simply having access to recycling (and not necessarily actually recycling anything). The council pointed out, for example, that *access* to the recycling of gabletops and aseptics was said to be almost 94% in Canada (allowing users to make a "widely recycled" claim) when in actual fact, in Ontario at least, actual recovery was only 34% and 12% respectively. **For a copy of PPEC's comments and recommendations please contact ppec@ppec-paper.com.**