



Environmental Services

## Memorandum

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Erin Mahoney, Commissioner, Environmental Services

DATE: June 9, 2016

RE: **Update on *Waste-Free Ontario Act***

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On June 1, 2016, Bill 151 - *Waste-Free Ontario Act, 2016* was passed by the Ontario Legislature and is expected to receive Royal Assent in the very near future.

Standing Committee amendments to the final *Waste-Free Ontario Act, 2016* do not fully address changes requested by municipalities

Amendments to the *Waste-Free Ontario Act, 2016* were made in response to some of the key concerns raised by municipalities including York Region. Language was added requiring stewards and/or the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to consult with “representatives of municipalities” during program wind up, new program development and when program changes are being considered. The Act does not specify what qualifies as representatives of municipalities, raising concerns that stewards may attempt to negotiate “one-offs” with individual municipalities. Collective representation would allow municipalities to pool resources to support dedicated staff and technical expertise to ensure there is fair and equal representation for all municipalities.

The wording that governs calculation of the steward funding obligation for the Blue Box Program was also modified during the clause-by-clause review. The revised wording allows the Minister to increase the funding level when it is “in the public interest” to do so and to make such increases retroactive to January 1 of the previous year. However it still leaves some opportunity for the stewards to continue to dispute costs incurred by municipalities, which may require further negotiations.

York Region has been actively engaged in consultations and advocacy efforts with other municipalities and municipal associations

The Region and its local municipal partners have worked with the Municipal Waste Association (MWA), Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), Regional Public

Works Commissioners of Ontario (RWPCO) and City of Toronto to advocate for a strong municipal role in the new legislation and fair compensation throughout the transition process. Regional and local municipal staff met to develop joint priorities for advocacy. Staff also participated in public consultations with the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change; a municipal consultation meeting hosted by AMO and supported development of a joint letter of comment from AMO, MWA and RWPCO.

Implementation of the *Waste-Free Ontario Act, 2016* will require extensive consultation over the next five years as policy statements, new regulations, transition plans and new programs are developed. York Region and its local municipal partners will continue to work collaboratively to advocate for the principles endorsed by Council. As more information on the process becomes available, updates on key issues will be brought to Council.

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Commissioner of Environmental  
Services

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