



*Recycling Council
of Alberta*

Proposed Construction & Demolition Program Waste Reduction Program

Background: C&D waste accounts for about 25 per cent of the total amount of municipal solid waste sent to landfill in Alberta. It is estimated that no more than 10 per cent of all C&D waste materials are currently being recycled. Alberta continues to lead the nation in terms of waste disposal per capita – well over a tonne per person.

History: In 1999, a C&D Waste Reduction Advisory Committee was formed by Alberta Environment to examine barriers and opportunities for waste reduction in the construction industry. Voluntary efforts developed by this committee proved to be largely ineffective.

Research was conducted on potential opportunities for construction waste reduction and diversion. This research led to a comprehensive report outlining options for Alberta.

Markets: Recycling markets are available to divert many C&D materials. Industry has been expanding infrastructure in anticipation of the program.

Extensive Consultation: Workshops were held with building contractors, engineers, architects, municipal government, landfill operators, recyclers and others to discuss potential approaches for Alberta. Their feedback resulted in a program proposal that was then vetted through additional stakeholder consultations in 2006 and 2007. Additional consultations were undertaken with stakeholders in 2008 and again mid-2009 to gain additional feedback on program elements.

Program Elements: Foundation of the program is a deposit-refund mechanism that would charge an initial deposit, based on square footage, value and/or type of building. All or part of this deposit would then be refunded upon completion of construction, depending on the amount of material diverted from disposal. The proposed program is set up so that waste generators (builders and construction companies) can get back the majority of their deposit if they participate in recycling their construction waste.

Program Administration: The program would be administered by a DAO, similar to Alberta's other waste stewardship programs. This removes the administrative burden from both the government and municipalities.

Industry Buy-In: In 2008, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Alberta Environment, the Alberta Construction Association (commercial builders) and the Canadian Home Builders' Association-Alberta (residential builders) to work together in developing a provincial C&D waste reduction program.

What is the Delay? The construction and building industries are supportive and ready. The recyclers and material processors have made significant investment in infrastructure and are ready for the program. Municipalities are taking steps to divert waste from landfill. Waste and recycling haulers have developed strategies to help generators to recycle. Alberta Environment has the program framework in place. The program has been publicly announced – everybody is waiting.

It is important that we do not lose the momentum that has been built around this program. This is Alberta's opportunity to become a national leader in C&D waste diversion, while stimulating a vibrant and progressive industry in this province.