

BACKGROUND

A CANADA-WIDE STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING:

CCME Ministers are taking specific action toward reducing packaging waste generated and sent to landfill as part of a broader initiative to incorporate the principle of extended producer responsibility (EPR) as a component of Canada's waste management strategy. The establishment of EPR program requirements is the primary action being undertaken by CCME member governments to address packaging in Canada. However, EPR requirements alone may not be sufficient to drive producers to achieve CCME's broader goals for packaging reduction and sustainability. Based on consultation with stakeholders and the public on proposed strategies to reduce packaging waste in Canada, the Canada-wide Strategy for Sustainable Packaging proposes supporting measures to complement the EPR actions set out under the Canada-wide Action Plan for EPR. These measures are intended to help drive producers and other packaging actors to take further action to improve packaging sustainability and meet CCME's aspirational goal of zero waste.

Supporting Measures

Establish an industry-government working group to guide implementation of EPR and the Strategy's supporting measures.

As EPR programs are developed across the country, a Canada-wide dialogue between industry and government can help to achieve a more consistent approach to EPR program requirements for packaging across jurisdictions. The working group can also provide a forum for collaboration by industry, government and other stakeholders to guide the implementation of the Strategy's supporting measures.

Pursue agreements with industry to reduce packaging and improve its sustainability

Agreements between CCME and specific industry sectors can provide an opportunity to build on the momentum already present among industry leaders in moving towards more sustainable packaging.

Develop Canada-wide standards and certification for compostable packaging

CCME is supporting the development of a Canada-wide standard and certification program by the Bureau du normalisation de Quebec (BNQ), including clear visual identification, for compostable packaging – expected completion March 2010.

Adopt Canada-wide sustainability indicators and metrics that can be used to assess the sustainability of packaging over its entire life cycle.

A uniform, Canada-wide set of sustainability indicators could assist all actors in the packaging life cycle – governments, producers, consumers – in taking consistent actions nationwide.

Explore with industry the potential development of a Canada-wide labelling system for recyclable packaging.

A harmonized Canada-wide approach to recyclability labels would facilitate national consistency in labelling claims and minimize confusion among industry and consumers.

Explore with industry opportunities for industry to implement and expand reuse systems.

Where appropriate, CCME may partner in studies or pilot projects of reuse programs, or undertake regulatory changes to remove barriers or support implementation.

Encourage the development of industry-led educational initiatives, best practices guidance and industry recognition programs that promote sustainable packaging design.

CCME will explore opportunities for government partnership with industry and other stakeholders in the development of education and recognition programs (such as CCME co-sponsorship of a sustainable packaging award, guidance materials for smaller businesses, etc.)

Explore with stakeholders the establishment of an ombudsman to address consumer complaints of excess packaging.

The release of an annual report, and the potential publicity that may result, could be a key tool to influence industry and effect changes in packaging.

Explore with industry the development of an index to measure packaging sustainability across Canada.

A shopping basket index tracks a fixed set of goods (e.g., a representative cross-section of 30 common household goods) over time and assesses how much packaging the shopping basket of goods contains and what types of materials are used.