



STATUS OF PLASTIC FILM

March 2018

WHAT IS PLASTIC FILM?

- ▶ #2 LDPE and #4 HDPE thin plastics
- ▶ Shopping Bags
- ▶ Overwrap, Pallet wrap
- ▶ Soil, produce, frozen vegetable bags
- ▶ Blue bags (for recycling)



BACKGROUND

- ▶ The People's Republic of China announced in July 2017 they will ban the import of 24 types of scrap (including film plastic) by the end of 2017.
- ▶ Still some uncertainty on how long and how strict the ban will be enforced.
- ▶ Plastic film is banned from landfill by the Province of Nova Scotia.
 - ▶ Strong markets for film when regulations were created.

CURRENT SITUATION - **WORLDWIDE**

- ▶ Some recyclers have diverted material to India, Vietnam, Malaysia, Mexico and other countries.
 - ▶ At least for now, none of these options have been enough to replace China's demand from recent years.
- ▶ Facility operators are slowing down their sorting lines, adding labour or investing in new equipment.
- ▶ It has also led service providers in some non-regulated jurisdictions to suspend service, raise prices or exclude certain materials from recycling programs.

CURRENT SITUATION – NOVA SCOTIA

- ▶ Facilities in Nova Scotia are stockpiling bales of plastic film.
- ▶ Halifax requested the province allow them to landfill film until market conditions become available. Other facilities are considering the same request.
 - ▶ Halifax has been granted permission to landfill for 6-month period.
 - ▶ Our contractor is not supportive of landfilling film at this time and is seeking alternative markets.

MANAGEMENT OF PLASTIC FILM – REGION 7

- ▶ Recycling: ~193 metric tonnes of plastic film recycled annually from Region 7 (2016-2017 data call)
- ▶ Landfill disposal: ~1000 tonnes landfilled annually in our Region. (2012 RRFB landfill audit)
- ▶ Nova Scotians use 300-500 million shopping bags annually.

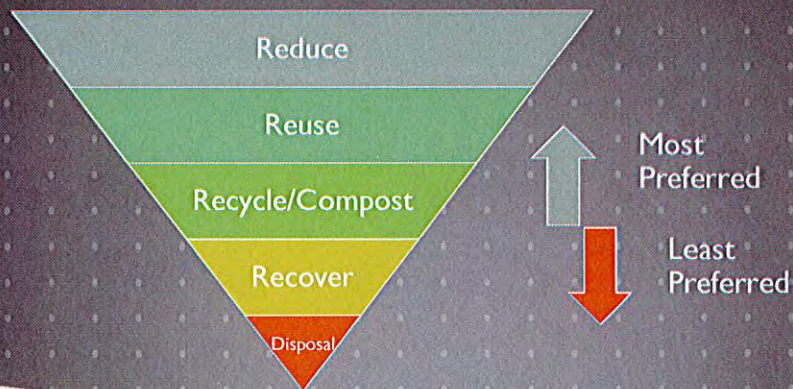


OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ **Litter:** Because they're lightweight, plastic bags are easily carried by wind and water and end up as litter.
- ▶ They take at least 1,000 years to break down.
- ▶ They don't biodegrade; rather, they fragment into small pieces.



WASTE HIERARCHY



OUR GOAL: WASTE REDUCTION

- ▶ Recycling, Waste to Energy and Landfilling should be viewed as the least preferred options to our plastic woes.
- ▶ **The best solution is to consume less.**
- ▶ Reducing our use of plastic bags is an easy place to start.
 - ▶ Single use bags are an inefficient use of resources. They are in most cases unnecessary.
 - ▶ Most retailers offer reusable alternatives.

OUR MESSAGE

- ▶ **Consume less** - use reusable bags and ReThink all disposables.
- ▶ **Refuse a bag** when one is not necessary.
- ▶ Continue to **RECYCLE**. Vast majority of our recycling is still being recycled.



OPTION TO REDUCE PLASTIC FILM #1

Banning Single Use Plastic Bags

- ▶ Recently implemented in Montreal; announced for Victoria B.C.
 - ▶ Some exceptions (produce bags, thicker/reusable bags)
 - ▶ Some retailers have own bans (Costco)
- ▶ Banned in many jurisdictions worldwide and by all levels of government. (Countries, States, Municipalities)
- ▶ In a 2012 national opinion poll conducted by Angus Reid, Atlantic Canadians showed the highest support in the country for banning the distribution of single-use plastic bags by retailers; 63% of Atlantic Canadian participants supporting the idea.
- ▶ *Environment Minister Rankin asked Regional Chairs if they would support a provincial ban on January 11, 2018.*

OPTION TO REDUCE PLASTIC FILM #2

Incentive Programs

- ▶ Jurisdiction regulates that consumers bring own bags or pay for each plastic bag. Retailers would responsible for issuing fees.
 - ▶ Recently initiated by Walmart & Bulk Barn
 - ▶ Some jurisdiction have banned plastic bags but leave it up to retailers to charge for paper or compostable bags.
- ▶ Reduces plastic shopping bag usage by approximately 50%

OPTION TO REDUCE PLASTIC FILM #3

▶ Voluntary Participation

- ▶ Education to public sector to use reusable alternatives.
- ▶ Retailers volunteer to participate.

RETAIL COUNCIL OF CANADA POSITION ON REDUCTION

By order of preference, RCC supports the following approaches to working with municipalities and governments to reduce single-use items:

- ▶ Mandate businesses to develop individual plans on single use item reduction
- ▶ Impose that a voluntary fee be charged on single use items (funds allocated by retailers)
- ▶ Impose a mandatory fee set by regulation/bylaw, but leaving businesses to decide what they are to do with the collected funds. Retailers do not support fees remitted to the government due to significant administrative burdens.

RCC POSITION ON A BAG BAN

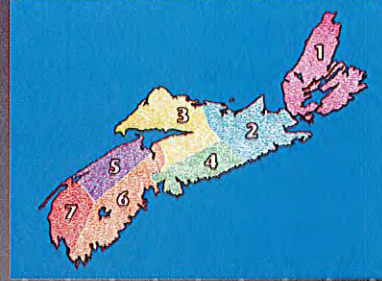
If a jurisdiction is considering a ban:

- ▶ Harmonization is needed and, if the ban is for single use plastic shopping bags, the bylaw/regulation should align with Montreal (50 microns). If thickness is mentioned with regards to single use plastic shopping bags, no requirement on handle material should be considered.
- ▶ Mandating recycled content/certification requirements will likely yield worse outcomes from a cost and administrative perspective than outright bans.
- ▶ N.B. Quebec municipalities discussing shopping bag actions are considering bans using thickness as a threshold to define what a reusable bag should be. As such, the order of preference cannot apply to bags in Quebec.

MOVING FORWARD

- ▶ Any municipality can legislate the banning of or a fee for single-use plastic bags through a bylaw.
- ▶ A province wide approach is preferable.
 - ▶ Creates harmonization of programs.
- ▶ Regional Chairs are reaffirming their support for an Extended Producer Responsibility program for packaging and paper.
- ▶ The province is contemplating a single use plastic bag ban and are seeking support from municipalities.
- ▶ Provincial and municipal staff are committed to the development of a waste reduction education campaign.

WHAT WE KNOW ...



- ▶ Region 1 – hasn't met yet
 - ▶ Region 2A – Yes with EPR -
 - ▶ Region 2B – Pictou Yes 3 – 3 haven't met yet
 - ▶ Region 3 – Yes with EPR - Cumberland, Amherst, Town of Truro - No Town of Oxford East Hants Yes - other units haven't met yet.
 - ▶ Region 4 – Yes with EPR
 - ▶ Region 5 – Yes see resolution
 - ▶ Region 6 - Yes see resolution
 - ▶ Region 7 – Yes – 3 of 6 MOD, MOY, TOY - other Municipal Units are taking to council
- ▶ As of March 9, 2018

REGION 5 RESOLUTION

- ▶ **WHEREAS** single-use plastic bags are a world-wide source of persistent and widespread pollution on land and in the sea; and
- ▶ **AND WHEREAS** markets for plastic film recycling (including single-use plastic bags) are limited and costly where they do exist; and
- ▶ **AND WHEREAS** a province-wide ban in Nova Scotia is an important step in educating Nova Scotian's to use reusable products rather than disposable ones;
- ▶ **THEREFORE Be It Resolved:**
 - ▶ The Valley Region Solid Waste-Resource Management Authority (Region Five) supports a province-wide ban on single-use plastic bags, provided that the ban is part of a province-wide strategy and promotional campaign to reduce the use of all single use plastic products