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# Climate Change **Action Plan**

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## ONTARIO'S FOOD AND ORGANIC WASTE

# Policy Statement



Ontario

**Issued on April 30, 2018 pursuant to s. 11 of the  
Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016**

Approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, Order in Council  
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# Part I: Preamble

The Food and Organic Waste Policy Statement (“the Policy Statement”) supports the provincial vision of a *circular economy* and is an important tool to help move towards the province’s visionary goals of zero waste and zero greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector.

The Policy Statement focuses on *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* through preventing and reducing *food waste*, effectively and efficiently collecting and processing *food and organic waste*, and reintegrating recovered resources back into the economy.

The Policy Statement provides policy direction to further the provincial interest related to *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* of *food and organic waste*. In particular the policies that make up the Policy Statement further the following aims of the provincial interest set out in section 2 of the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016:

- Protect the natural environment and human health.
- Foster the continued growth and development of the *circular economy*.
- Minimize greenhouse gas emissions resulting from *resource recovery* activities and *waste reduction* activities.
- Minimize the generation of waste, including waste from products and packaging.
- Minimize the need for waste disposal.
- Minimize the environmental impacts that result from *resource recovery* activities and *waste reduction* activities, including from waste disposal.
- Provide efficient, effective, convenient and reliable services related to *waste reduction* and *resource recovery*, including waste management services.
- Increase the reuse and recycling of waste across all sectors of the economy.
- Increase opportunities and markets for recovered resources.
- Promote public education and awareness with respect to *resource recovery* and *waste reduction*.
- Promote co-operation and co-ordination among the various persons and entities involved in *resource recovery* activities and *waste reduction* activities.

*Waste reduction* and *resource recovery* of *food and organic waste* will help improve environmental outcomes, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and recover valuable nutrients, thus fostering a *circular economy*.

The policies within the Policy Statement may be complemented by other future policy statements issued to support the aims of the provincial interest in *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* as set out in section 2 of the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016, as well as other actions, including provincial regulations, plans and guidelines. The Policy Statement may also be complemented by municipal policies and private sector initiatives that contribute to *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* of *food and organic waste*.

# Part II: How to Read the Policy Statement

## Legislative Authority

The Policy Statement is issued pursuant to section 11 of the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016 which came into force on November 30, 2016. The Policy Statement must be reviewed and considered for amendment within 10 years after it is issued.

Sections 12 and 13 of the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016 together require that when specified persons or entities subject to the Policy Statement exercise a power or perform a duty related to *food and organic waste*, they must ensure those things are done in a manner that is consistent with the Policy Statement.

The individual policies contained within the Policy Statement will specify the persons or entities that the policy applies to. The Policy Statement only applies to those persons or entities specified in the applicable policy.

## Read the Policy Statement in its Entirety

Given the variety of persons and entities subject to the policies within the Policy Statement, and the variety of actions and activities that they undertake in the reduction and recovery of *food and organic waste*, not all policies are applicable to every person, entity or activity.

Reading the Policy Statement in its entirety will assist in understanding how its individual policies apply to specified persons or entities who are required to do things in a manner consistent with it. This Policy Statement is intended to support mutual understanding and co-operation among various persons and entities involved in *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* in Ontario in order to further the aims of the provincial interest.

## Policy Language

When applying the Policy Statement it is important to consider the specific language of the policies.

Some policies set out positive directives, such as “shall”. Other policies use enabling or supportive language, such as “should,” “promote” and “encourage.” Some policies set out limitations, such as “should only”.

The choice of language is intended to distinguish between the types of policies and the nature of implementation. There is some discretion when applying a policy with enabling or supportive language in contrast to a policy with a directive or limitation.

### **Geographic Scale of Policies**

The Policy Statement recognizes the geographic diversity of Ontario and that local context is important with respect to *waste reduction* and *resource recovery*. Policies are outcome-oriented, and some policies provide flexibility in their implementation provided that the aims of the provincial interest are supported.

While the Policy Statement is meant to apply to all of Ontario, there are times when specified policies will only apply to specific areas given their particular geographic circumstances. Other policies refer to *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* objectives that need to be considered in the context of the province as a whole.

### **Minimum Standards**

The direction in the policies in the Policy Statement represents minimum standards. Persons or entities subject to the policies may go beyond these minimum standards to address matters of importance to specific activities, industries, sectors or communities, unless doing so would be inconsistent with any of the policies contained within the Policy Statement.

### **Defined Terms and Meanings**

Italicized terms in the Policy Statement are defined in the Glossary section. For non-italicized terms, the normal meaning of the word applies. Terms may be italicized only in specific policies; for these terms, the defined meaning applies where they are italicized and the normal meaning applies where they are not italicized. Defined terms in the Glossary section are intended to capture both singular and plural forms of these terms in the policies.

### **Relationship to Provincial Policies, Plans, and Instruments**

Provincial land use policies and plans, such as a provincial policy statement issued under subsection 3(1) of the Planning Act provide policy direction to address land use issues facing *municipalities* which are at times related to specific geographic areas in Ontario. The policies in this Policy Statement are intended to complement these policies and plans.

If there is a conflict between this Policy Statement and a provincial policy statement issued under subsection 3(1) of the Planning Act or any prescribed instrument, the policy statement or provision that provides the greatest protection to the natural

environment and human health governs, to the extent of the conflict. If they provide equal protection, the policy that best promotes the provincial interest in *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* described in section 2 of the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016 governs, to the extent of the conflict.

### **Timing for Consistency**

Section 14 of the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016 requires amendments to official plans, zoning by-laws, other by-laws and prescribed instruments related to *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* where necessary to ensure consistency with policy statements.

*Municipalities* and other planning authorities shall ensure that official plans are consistent with the Policy Statement by the end of the period determined under subsection 26 (1) of the Planning Act, while municipal zoning by-laws must be amended within three years after the related official plan amendment.

By-laws made under acts identified in Section 12 of the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016 that relate to *waste reduction* and *resource recovery*, as well as relevant prescribed instruments, must also be made consistent with the Policy Statement within 2 years of the Policy Statement being issued.

All persons or entities not exercising a power or performing a duty pursuant to instruments listed in the previous three paragraphs must make their activities relating to *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* consistent with the Policy Statement from the day it is issued subject to the following:

- i. Persons or entities subject to the policies in section 3 must make their activities consistent with the applicable policy within one year from the day the Policy Statement is issued by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.
- ii. Persons or entities subject to policies 4.2 to 4.5 or 4.10 to 4.18 must make their activities consistent with the applicable policies in accordance with the timelines established for these persons or entities in order to meet the targets in policy 2.1.



# Part III: Policies

## 1. Ontario Food Recovery Hierarchy

The Policy Statement supports an Ontario Food Recovery Hierarchy in order to prioritize the highest and best use of our food resources in Ontario. The Ontario Food Recovery Hierarchy prioritizes actions that governments, businesses, organizations and consumers can take in order to move towards a sustainable model of *waste reduction* and *resource recovery*.

- 1.1 The Ontario Food Recovery Hierarchy consists of the following steps in order of importance:
  - i. Reduce: prevent or reduce *food and organic waste* at the source.
  - ii. Feed People: safely rescue and redirect surplus food before it becomes waste.
  - iii. Recover Resources: recover *food and organic waste* to develop end-products for a *beneficial use*.
- 1.2 Persons or entities engaging in *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* activities should consider prioritizing their activities according to the Ontario Food Recovery Hierarchy set out in policy 1.1.

## 2. Targets

In order to ensure that *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* efforts are reflective of an evidence-based policy approach, targets need to be established.

The Policy Statement gives direction to prevent and reduce *food and organic waste* at each stage of the food supply chain, including the production, distribution, consumption and recovery of *food and organic waste*. The Policy Statement establishes *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* targets as a means of assessing progress in addressing *food and organic waste*.

- 2.1 Sector-specific *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* targets are included in the table below. The persons or entities set out in column 1 must meet the targets in column 2 by the dates set out in column 2.

COLUMN 1: PERSON OR ENTITY	COLUMN 2: TARGET
a) <b>Municipalities subject to policy 4.1</b>	70 per cent <i>waste reduction</i> and <i>resource recovery</i> of <i>food and organic waste</i> generated by single-family dwellings in <i>urban settlement areas</i> by 2023
b) <b>Municipalities in Southern Ontario subject to policy 4.2i</b>	70 per cent <i>waste reduction</i> and <i>resource recovery</i> of <i>food and organic waste</i> generated by single-family dwellings in <i>urban settlement areas</i> by 2025
c) <b>Municipalities in Southern Ontario subject to policy 4.2ii</b>	50 per cent <i>waste reduction</i> and <i>resource recovery</i> of <i>food and organic waste</i> generated by single-family dwellings in <i>urban settlement areas</i> by 2025
d) <b>Municipalities in Northern Ontario subject to policy 4.3</b>	50 per cent <i>waste reduction</i> and <i>resource recovery</i> of <i>food and organic waste</i> generated by single-family dwellings in <i>urban settlement areas</i> by 2025
e) <b>Multi-unit residential buildings subject to policy 4.10</b>	50 per cent <i>waste reduction</i> and <i>resource recovery</i> of <i>food and organic waste</i> generated at the building by 2025
f) <b>Industrial and commercial facilities subject to policy 4.14</b>	70 per cent <i>waste reduction</i> and <i>resource recovery</i> of <i>food and organic waste</i> generated in the facility by 2025

COLUMN 1: PERSON OR ENTITY	COLUMN 2: TARGET
<b>g) Industrial and commercial facilities subject to policy 4.15</b>	50 per cent <i>waste reduction</i> and <i>resource recovery of food and organic waste</i> generated in the facility by 2025
<b>h) Educational institutions and hospitals subject to policy 4.18</b>	70 per cent <i>waste reduction</i> and <i>resource recovery of food and organic waste</i> generated in the facility by 2025

2.2 Persons or entities subject to policy 2.1 shall achieve their target through *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* efforts with respect to the following types of waste:

- i. *Food waste*
- ii. *Organic waste*, including:
  - a. *Organic waste* resulting from food preparation
  - b. Soiled paper

2.3 *Municipalities* subject to policy 2.1 shall, in addition to the *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* efforts set out in policy 2.2, achieve their target through further *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* efforts with respect to the following types of *organic waste*:

- i. Leaf and yard waste
- ii. Seasonal outdoor wastes
- iii. Flowers and houseplants

2.4 Persons or entities subject to policy 2.1 are encouraged to engage in additional *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* efforts to achieve their target, with respect to the following types of *organic waste*:

- i. Personal hygiene wastes
- ii. Sanitary products
- iii. Shredded paper
- iv. Additional paper fibre products
- v. *Compostable products and packaging*
- vi. Pet food and wastes

- 2.5 The targets referred to in policy 2.1 shall be achieved through *waste reduction* activities and *resource recovery* activities, relating to one or more of the following:
- i. The prevention or reduction of *food and organic waste* at the source.
  - ii. The safe rescue and redirection of surplus food before it becomes waste.
  - iii. The recovery of *food and organic waste* to develop end-products for a *beneficial use*.
- 2.6 The targets referred to in policy 2.1 cannot be achieved through the following methods or uses:
- i. The use of *food and organic waste* to generate alternative fuels or energy from waste without the concurrent recovery of nutrients.
  - ii. The direct discharge of *food waste* or *organic waste* into a municipal sewer, including when facilitated by food waste disposers or other grinding devices.
  - iii. The use of recovered organic resources for landfill cover.

### 3. Reduce Food Waste

Preventing food from becoming waste in the first place is essential in order to address the issue of *food waste*.

A substantial amount of food in Canada is wasted at the consumer level. Consumers are often unaware of the true amount they waste and its associated costs. Consumers often lack awareness not only about the extent of *food waste*, but also the actions that can be taken to prevent *food waste* at the household level. The underlying causes of consumer *food waste* include purchasing habits, confusion over expiry and best before dates, as well as preparation, serving and storage practices.

However, we also know that a significant amount of food is either lost or wasted along the food supply chain. For example, *food waste* in the supply chain could occur while the food is processed into a product or further along at the retail level or at restaurants. *Food waste* within the supply chain is the result of factors such as overproduction, food not meeting market standards as well as gaps in existing storage, inventory and manufacturing practices.

#### Promotion and Education

Preventing and reducing *food waste* requires a significant change in behaviour. Changing behaviour, in turn, requires a consistent and long-term effort to shift understanding of food in general and *food waste* specifically. It will also require the formation of new practices by both businesses and consumers.

Better promotion and education will encourage a change in behaviour and reduce the amount of food wasted in Ontario. From businesses to households, everyone has a role to play in preventing *food waste*.

- 3.1 *Retail shopping establishments and retail shopping complexes that generate food waste, restaurants and food processors that are large manufacturing establishments shall develop and implement their own education programs aimed at preventing and reducing consumer food waste. The focus of the promotion and education program should primarily be on reaching consumers directly through information that will assist consumers in preventing and reducing food waste.*

- 3.2 *Retail shopping establishments and retail shopping complexes* that generate *food waste*, *restaurants, hotels and motels* and food processors that are *large manufacturing establishments* shall, in partnership with their industry associations, provide sector-based promotion and education to promote operational best practices that can prevent and reduce *food waste*.
- 3.3 *Municipalities* shall develop and implement their own promotion and education programs aimed at preventing *food waste*. The focus of the education program should primarily be on reaching consumers directly through information that will assist consumers in preventing and reducing *food waste*.

### **Reducing *Food Waste* by Businesses**

The food industry also has a pivotal role to play in reducing *food waste* that occurs at earlier points in the supply chain before food even reaches consumers. Taking steps to prevent and reduce *food waste* in the processing and distribution stages of the supply chain, recognizes the clear linkage between *food waste* prevention and reduction measures and the subsequent net benefit to industry operations. These initiatives improve social, environmental and economic outcomes.

- 3.4 *Retail shopping establishments, retail shopping complexes, restaurants, hotels and motels* and food processors that are *large manufacturing establishments* that generate more than 300 kilograms of *food waste* per week should identify where *food waste* occurs in their operations, conduct regular *food waste* audits to quantify the amount and type of *food waste* and take measures to prevent and reduce the amount of *food waste* that is occurring.
- 3.5 *Retail shopping establishments, retail shopping complexes, restaurants, hotels and motels* and food processors that are *large manufacturing establishments* should, where feasible:
- i. Incorporate the use of *imperfect produce* in food processing and in food and meal preparation.
  - ii. Make *imperfect produce* available to consumers.

### **Rescue of Surplus Food**

There are circumstances where food is edible yet becomes waste. The rescue of surplus food can be an effective means of redirecting nourishing, edible food that may otherwise not be used. Improving the accessibility, responsiveness and efficiency of efforts to redirect surplus food while ensuring health and safety concerns are also met, will help ensure that edible food is not lost to disposal.

- 3.6 *Retail shopping establishments, retail shopping complexes, restaurants, hotels and motels* and food processors that are *large manufacturing establishments* should:
- i. Develop relationships or partnerships with *food rescue organizations* in order to facilitate the safe distribution of surplus food in a timely and effective manner.
  - ii. Explore the use of technology to help improve logistics and safely direct surplus food to distribution points more effectively.

## 4. Recover Resources from *Food and Organic Waste*

Increased *resource recovery* of *food and organic waste* from both the residential and the Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (IC&I) sector is essential in order to reach Ontario's goals of zero waste and zero greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector.

Ontario's residential sector has made considerable progress in recovering *food and organic waste* from disposal. Additional efforts will increase collection in more communities across the province.

A growing number of people are living in multi-unit residential buildings. There is a need for greater efforts and innovative ways to recover *food and organic waste* in multi-unit residential buildings.

The IC&I sector generates large volumes of *food and organic waste* in Ontario. Significant effort to increase recovery is needed from major generators in this sector, such as grocery stores, shopping malls, restaurants, hotels, motels, educational institutions, food processing facilities and hospitals in order to build a *circular economy*.

### **Increasing Resource Recovery from the Residential Sector**

Many of the existing *resource recovery* programs in Ontario for *food and organic waste* are currently offered in large urban areas with high density; however, opportunities exist to increase the availability of and participation in programs in more communities across the province.

### **Maintaining existing municipal curbside collection services**

- 4.1 *Municipalities* that, as of the effective date, provide curbside collection of source separated *food and organic waste* shall maintain or expand these services to ensure residents have access to convenient and accessible collection services.
  - i. In addition to curbside collection of source separated *food and organic waste*, other collection methods, such as directing disposal streams to *mixed waste processing*, may be used to support collection of additional *food and organic waste*.



## **Increasing Residential Resource Recovery in Southern Ontario**

- 4.2 *Municipalities in Southern Ontario* that, as of the effective date, do not provide curbside collection of source separated *food and organic waste* shall provide:
- i. Curbside collection of *food and organic waste* to single-family dwellings in an *urban settlement area* within a *local municipality* if the population of the *local municipality* is greater than 50,000 and the population density of the *local municipality* is greater than or equal to 300 persons per square kilometre.
  - ii. Collection of *food and organic waste* to single-family dwellings in an *urban settlement area* within a *local municipality* if:
    - a. The population of the *local municipality* is greater than 50,000 and the population density of the *local municipality* is less than 300 persons per square kilometre; or
    - b. The population of the *local municipality* is greater than 20,000 but equal to or less than 50,000 and the population density of the *local municipality* is greater than or equal to 100 persons per square kilometre.

## **Increasing Residential Resource Recovery in Northern Ontario**

- 4.3 *Municipalities in Northern Ontario* that, as of the effective date, do not provide curbside collection of source separated *food and organic waste* shall provide curbside collection of *food and organic waste* to single-family dwellings in an *urban settlement area* within a *local municipality* if:
- i. The population of the *local municipality* is greater than 50,000 and the population density of the *local municipality* is greater than or equal to 300 persons per square kilometre.

## **Collection Preference and Alternatives for Residential Resource Recovery**

- 4.4 For *municipalities* subject to policies 4.2(i) and 4.3:
- i. Collection of source separated *food and organic waste* is the preferred method of servicing single-family dwellings.
  - ii. Alternatives to the collection of source separated *food and organic waste* may be used if it is demonstrated that provincial *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* targets can be achieved efficiently and effectively.
- 4.5 For *municipalities* subject to policies 4.2 (ii):
- i. Curbside collection of source separated *food and organic waste* is the preferred method of servicing single-family dwellings.

- ii. Alternatives to curbside collection or source separation of *food and organic waste* may be used if it is demonstrated that provincial *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* targets can be achieved efficiently and effectively.

### **Supporting Residential *Resource Recovery* through Other Methods**

- 4.6 Where collection of *food and organic waste* is not provided subject to policies 4.1 to 4.5, *municipalities* shall provide for the *resource recovery* of *food and organic waste* through means such as home composting, community composting and local event days.
- 4.7 *Municipalities* and other planning authorities should pursue regional approaches to facilitate the efficient and effective collection of *food and organic waste* from *urban settlement areas*.
- 4.8 *Municipalities*, working with municipal associations, shall provide promotion and education materials to residents that support and increase participation in *resource recovery* efforts available to residents of their community.
- 4.9 *Municipalities* and other planning authorities should ensure that their official plans, zoning by-laws, plan of subdivision approvals and site plan approvals support the *resource recovery* of *food and organic waste* for their residents.

### **Increasing *Resource Recovery* from Multi-unit Residential Buildings**

Curbing urban sprawl, protecting agricultural land and promoting long-term economic growth has resulted in changes to how we plan, build and live in our communities. Shifts towards more compact urban forms and multi-unit residential developments are increasing demand for innovative ways to recover *food and organic waste*.

Improving access to *food and organic waste resource recovery* services for this growing segment of Ontarians is a key factor to moving towards greater *waste reduction* and *resource recovery*.

- 4.10 *Multi-unit residential buildings* shall provide collection of *food and organic waste* to their residents.
- 4.11 For *multi-unit residential buildings*:
  - i. Collection of source separated *food and organic waste* is the preferred method of servicing *multi-unit residential buildings*.
  - ii. Alternatives to the collection of source separated *food and organic waste* may be used if it is demonstrated that provincial *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* targets can be achieved efficiently and effectively.

- 4.12 *Multi-unit residential buildings* should implement best practices that support convenient access to *resource recovery* efforts.
- 4.13 *Multi-unit residential buildings* shall provide promotion and education materials to residents that support and increase participation in *resource recovery* efforts.

### **Increasing Resource Recovery from the Industrial and Commercial Sectors**

Generators in the industrial and commercial sectors account for a significant portion of *food and organic waste* sent for disposal in Ontario. This group represents the largest opportunity to recover *food and organic waste* across the entire province. Ontario's commitment to decreasing the amount of resources going to disposal will require significant increases in *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* from the sector.

- 4.14 All *retail shopping establishments, retail shopping complexes, office buildings, restaurants, hotels and motels* and *large manufacturing establishments*, subject to O. Reg. 103/94 under the Environmental Protection Act, that generate 300 kilograms or more of *food and organic waste* per week shall source separate *food and organic waste*.
- 4.15 All retail shopping establishments, retail shopping complexes, office buildings, restaurants, hotels and motels, and large manufacturing establishments, not subject to O. Reg. 103/94 under the Environmental Protection Act, that generate 300 kilograms or more of *food and organic waste* per week shall source separate *food and organic waste*.
- 4.16 All other retail shopping establishments, retail shopping complexes, office buildings, restaurants, hotels and motels and large manufacturing establishments that generate less than 300 kilograms of *food and organic waste* per week should source separate *food and organic waste*.
- 4.17 All *retail shopping establishments, retail shopping complexes, office buildings, restaurants, hotels and motels, and large manufacturing establishments* shall provide users of these facilities promotion and education materials that support and increase participation in *resource recovery* efforts.

## Increasing *Resource Recovery* from the Institutional Sector

Larger institutions subject to O. Reg. 103/94 under the Environmental Protection Act such as schools, universities and colleges as well as hospitals have played a leading role in providing *resource recovery* opportunities outside the home. In order to develop a culture of *resource recovery*, our institutions will need to maximize source separation efforts as we build a *circular economy* in Ontario. Large institutions in particular have an important role to play in changing how Ontarians both reduce and recover *food and organic waste*.

- 4.18 *Educational institutions and hospitals*, subject to O. Reg. 103/94 under the Environmental Protection Act, that generate 150 kilograms or more of *food and organic waste* per week shall source separate *food and organic waste*.

## Management of collected *food and organic waste*

In order to recover resources from *food and organic waste* and return these resources to Ontario's soils, those involved in the management of *food and organic waste* should take measures to maximize *resource recovery* and eliminate disposal. This is particularly important where waste not considered *food and organic waste* (e.g. non-compostable packaging, stickers on fruits and vegetables, rubber bands and ties) mixes with *food and organic waste*, creating costs for *resource recovery systems* and diminishing the quality of end-products that would have been derived from them.

- 4.19 Persons or entities subject to policies in section 4 shall ensure that:
- i. Steps have been taken to avoid the contamination of collected *food and organic waste* by non-organic materials.
  - ii. All collected *food and organic waste* is sent for *resource recovery*.
- 4.20 To maximize recovery of *food and organic waste*, *owners* and *operators* of *resource recovery systems* shall:
- i. Manage source separated waste streams in a manner that limits contamination.
  - ii. Use appropriate technologies that can effectively recover collected materials.
  - iii. Not direct or send source separated *food and organic waste* for disposal.
- 4.21 To promote effective and efficient *resource recovery*, *owners* and *operators* of *resource recovery systems* may adopt financial measures that encourage generators to maximize *resource recovery* and discourage disposal.

## 5. Compostable Products and Packaging

*Compostable products and packaging* are intended to be managed at end of life in a reasonable timeframe through composting, *anaerobic digestion*, or other processes that result in decomposition by bacteria or other living organisms.

*Compostable products and packaging* are a relatively new and emerging waste stream. While packaging in particular has traditionally been part of the Blue Box program in Ontario, new types of products and packaging, especially in relation to *food waste*, are creating both challenges and opportunities for *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* of the products and packaging.

*Compostable products and packaging* should be recovered for a *beneficial use* and should not be sent to disposal. As *compostable products and packaging* become more common in Ontario there is broad recognition that more work needs to be done to better integrate these new types of products and packaging into Ontario's *circular economy*.

New ways of thinking are required in order to help ensure that the *resource recovery* of *compostable products and packaging* results in materials with *beneficial uses* that are consistent with Ontario's vision of achieving zero waste and zero greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector.

With the shift to greater amounts of *compostable products and packaging* being used in particular for food and food products, producer responsibility should be taken into account with regard to the *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* of the *compostable products and packaging* that producers sell in Ontario.

- 5.1 Persons or entities that are brand holders of or market *compostable products and packaging* should ensure they are certified according to international, national or industry standards and meet environmental standards in Ontario.
- 5.2 *Municipalities and owners and operators of resource recovery systems* that process *food and organic waste* are encouraged to support new technology and innovation to recover *compostable products and packaging*.
- 5.3 Persons or entities that are brand holders of or market *compostable products and packaging* should provide promotion and education to inform consumers on how to participate in *resource recovery* programs for *compostable products and packaging*.

## 6. Support Resource Recovery Infrastructure

Ontario's vision for zero waste and zero greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector is dependent on effective, efficient and economical systems that maximize *resource recovery* and support a low-carbon economy.

As the province, *municipalities* and the private sector take action to increase *resource recovery* of *food and organic waste*, Ontario will face significant demand for new or expanded *resource recovery systems*.

Ontario will need to support existing *resource recovery systems* and develop additional capacity to process *food and organic waste*. These facilities must be well-planned and suitably sited to ensure the long-term effectiveness of our *resource recovery* systems.

Co-ordination and co-operation between the public and private sectors is needed to ensure that decisions related to *food and organic waste* take into account local and regional management needs, emerging trends and provincial climate change implications. Ontario will need to create conditions to foster investment in recovery capacity in order to build a *circular economy* for *food and organic waste*.

### Strategic Infrastructure Planning

Strategic infrastructure planning is important for supporting the development of efficient and effective infrastructure capacity. When siting new capacity or re-designating neighbouring land uses, promoting compatibility, preventing encroachment and mitigating *adverse effects* are critical to ensuring that existing and planned facilities can contribute to building a *circular economy* in Ontario.

- 6.1 *Municipalities* and other planning authorities should protect existing and planned *resource recovery systems* from incompatible uses and plan for new systems, where appropriate, to meet projected needs.
- 6.2 *Municipalities* and other planning authorities are encouraged to pursue regional approaches to address *food and organic waste resource recovery* capacity needs, including supporting *resource recovery systems* that build economies of scale for *food and organic waste* processing.

- 6.3 To ensure appropriate siting and compatibility between uses and adjacent uses, *municipalities* shall ensure that approvals for new or expanded *resource recovery systems* address the *D-Series Land Use Compatibility Guidelines* and the *Guideline for the Production of Compost in Ontario*.
- 6.4 To prevent or mitigate *adverse effects* from odour, noise and other contaminants, the *Director* shall address the *D-Series Land Use Compatibility Guidelines* and the *Guideline for the Production of Compost in Ontario* when reviewing approvals for new or expanded *resource recovery systems*.

### **Fostering Timely Approvals**

Municipal and provincial approvals (e.g. land use and environmental approvals) ensure that *resource recovery systems* are designed, sited and developed to address matters related to the environment, economy and society. A strategic and collaborative approach will help facilitate timely decisions for these essential facilities.

- 6.5 The province, *municipalities* and other planning authorities should co-ordinate and complement approaches to provincial and municipal approvals, wherever possible, to facilitate timely decisions for *resource recovery systems*.
- 6.6 Proponents of new or expanded *resource recovery systems* should provide complete submissions for provincial and municipal approvals, as per provincial and municipal guidance.
- 6.7 When reviewing environmental approvals applications for new or expanded *resource recovery systems*, the *Director* should consider, in addition to considering the ministry's Statement of Environmental Values, regulations, guidelines and best management practices:
- i. The need to support regional approaches for increasing processing capacity.
  - ii. The need to support innovative methods to increase processing capacity in areas of rural, remote and Northern communities to facilitate *resource recovery* in these areas.
  - iii. Climate change impacts, including greenhouse gas emissions from the site or facility.
- 6.8 Proponents of new or expanded *waste management systems* for disposal should consider *resource recovery* opportunities for *food and organic waste*.



## Ensuring Long-term Facility Sustainability

Ensuring that Ontario's ability to recover resources from *food and organic waste* remains viable in the long-term is an important part of building strong, healthy and prosperous communities that can maximize *waste reduction*, engage in *resource recovery*, and fight climate change. The effective, efficient and responsive development and operation of *resource recovery systems* will support Ontario in achieving zero waste and zero greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector.

- 6.9 *Owners and operators of resource recovery systems* are encouraged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions generated from their operations, where feasible. *Food and organic waste* should be managed as close to the source as is realistically possible to limit greenhouse gas emissions resulting from transportation and haulage.
- 6.10 *Owners and operators of resource recovery systems* that create *digestate* are encouraged to maximize any energy captured to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- 6.11 *Owners and operators of resource recovery systems* should develop outreach plans that ensure regular engagement of local communities, as well as processes to address public complaints, resolve disputes and communicate mitigation measures.

## Recovering Viable Organic Resources from Disposal Streams Using Other Methods

The recovery of organic resources from disposal streams can support *resource recovery* where these processes produce viable organic resources that can be marketed or land applied in Ontario.

- 6.12 When undertaking *mixed waste processing*, *owners and operators of resource recovery systems* should only accept source separated *food and organic waste* in instances when contamination or availability issues arise.
- 6.13 When undertaking *mixed waste processing*, *owners and operators of resource recovery systems* should demonstrate that recovered organic resources will regularly meet all applicable environmental quality standards.
- 6.14 When undertaking *mixed waste processing*, *owners and operators of resource recovery systems* should send recovered organic resources for further processing, such as composting or *anaerobic digestion*, where necessary.



- 6.15 Existing wastewater treatment infrastructure may be considered to process source separated *food waste*, where there exists (or can be created, for example through approaches such as optimization, infrastructure upgrades or adoption of advanced technology) excess capacity to create high-value end-products.
- 6.16 *Municipalities* are encouraged to plan for the management and *beneficial use* of *biosolids*, including considering new and enhanced *biosolids* processing technologies and co-management practices that support volume minimization and nutrient recovery.

## 7. Promote *Beneficial Uses*

Turning *food and organic waste* into valuable end-products supports healthy soils, promotes crop growth and enhances carbon storage.

Reintegrating *food and organic waste* into the economy recovers the resources embedded in these materials. As additional *food and organic waste* recovery capacity is developed, markets and end-uses should be expanded and diversified through new and innovative approaches.

- 7.1 *Owners and operators of resource recovery systems that create compost* should:
  - i. Promote the use and benefits of *compost*.
  - ii. Educate users on the rules and best practices for using *compost*.
  - iii. Make *compost* convenient and accessible to residents, community groups, farmers and services that could benefit from using *compost*.
- 7.2 *Owners and operators of resource recovery systems that create compost, digestate or other high-quality soil amendments* should promote the *beneficial use* of these materials to create agricultural soil amendments that improve the quality of existing soils and promote the growth of crops, groundcover or other vegetation.
- 7.3 *Owners and operators of resource recovery systems that recover organic resources* should increase the *beneficial use* of recovered organic resources to build soils where they previously did not exist, where it is safe and appropriate to do so.
- 7.4 *Municipalities* should consider how their existing policies or procedures could encourage the use of *compost, digestate* and other soil amendments, such as facility and site maintenance, development, site and facility approvals, and green procurement.

## 8. Implementation and Interpretation

- 8.1 The Policy Statement comes into effect on the day it is issued by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.
- 8.2 The timing within which persons or entities must make their activities consistent with the Policy Statement is set out in Part II.
- 8.3 This Policy Statement shall be read in its entirety and all relevant policies are to be applied to each situation.
- 8.4 The province may issue guidance material and technical criteria from time to time to assist decision-makers with implementing the policies of the Policy Statement. Information, best practices, technical criteria and approaches outlined in guidance material are meant to support but not add to or detract from the policies of the Policy Statement.
- 8.5 The province may work with *municipalities*, the IC&I sector and others to develop guidance to support measurement and achievement of the targets established in the Policy Statement. Guidance could include:
- i. Clarification on the types of *food and organic waste* collected for *resource recovery*.
  - ii. Guidelines for establishing a baseline measurement used for measuring progress.
  - iii. Clarification on how prevention, the rescue of surplus food and *resource recovery* efforts can be counted towards the targets.
- 8.6 *Municipalities* are encouraged to establish performance indicators to monitor the implementation of the policies.
- 8.7 The Minister shall report on the progress of the Policy Statement as part of the 5 year progress reports on the Strategy for a Waste-Free Ontario: Building a Circular Economy.
- 8.8 The Minister shall review the Policy Statement within 10 years of the date it is issued and consider whether it should be amended. In considering whether to amend the Policy Statement, the Minister shall consult with representatives of *municipalities*, persons engaging in *waste reduction* and *resource recovery* activities, representatives of environmental organizations and the public.

# GLOSSARY

*Adverse effect:* means one or more of:

- i. impairment of the quality of the natural environment for any use that can be made of it,
- ii. injury or damage to property or to plant or animal life,
- iii. harm or material discomfort to any person,
- iv. an *adverse effect* on the health of any person,
- v. impairment of the safety of any person,
- vi. rendering any property or plant or animal life unfit for human use,
- vii. loss of enjoyment of normal use of property, and
- viii. interference with the normal conduct of business.

(As defined in the *D-Series Land Use Compatibility Guidelines*.)

*Anaerobic digestion:* means the decomposition of organic matter by bacteria in an oxygen-limiting environment (as defined in Regulation 347 under the Environmental Protection Act). The biogas generated through *anaerobic digestion* can be used to fuel electrical generators, or it can be further processed into renewable natural gas. The *digestate* may also be used as a soil amendment that is most commonly used in agricultural operations.

*Beneficial use:* means the use of organic resources recovered from *food and organic waste* to deliver nutrients, organic matter, or moisture to improve soil fertility, soil structure or to help build soils where they do not exist. Use of recovered organic resources for landfill cover is not considered a *beneficial use*. The generation of energy or alternative fuels from recovered *food and organic waste* is not considered a *beneficial use*. The recovery of nutrients, such as *digestate* from *anaerobic digestion*, is considered a *beneficial use* where the *digestate* is used to build new or improve existing soils.

*Biosolids:* means the residue from a sewage treatment works following treatment of sewage and removal of effluent.

*Circular economy:* means an economy in which participants strive to minimize the use of raw materials, to maximize the useful life of materials and other resources through *resource recovery*, and to minimize waste generated at the end of life of products and packaging (as defined in the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016).

*Compost*: means waste treated by aerobic decomposition of organic matter by bacterial action for the production of stabilized humus. *Compost* may be used as a soil amendment that is most commonly used in agricultural, horticultural and landscaping operations, as well as by residents in home gardens.

*Compostable products and packaging*: means products and packaging made that are intended to be managed at end of life through composting, *anaerobic digestion*, or other processes that result in decomposition by bacteria or other living organisms.

*D-Series Land Use Compatibility Guidelines*: means the environmental land use planning guides which provide environmental considerations and requirements for industrial land use, sensitive lands, sewage and water services, and private wells (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/environmental-land-use-planning-guides>).

*Digestate*: means the solid or liquid material that results from the treatment of *anaerobic digestion* materials in a mixed *anaerobic digestion* facility.

*Director*: means a Director appointed under section 5 of the Environmental Protection Act for the purposes of s.20.3 of the Act.

*Educational Institution*: means an operator of an educational institution to which section 14 of O. Reg. 103/94 under the Environmental Protection Act applies as it read immediately before the day this Policy Statement was issued.

*Food and organic waste*: has the same meaning of *food waste* and *organic waste* when used together.

*Food rescue organization*: means a non-profit organization that rescues, gleans, transports, prepares and distributes excess or surplus food from food wholesalers, food processors, food retailers, grocery stores and restaurants.

*Food waste*: means the edible parts of plants and animals that are produced or harvested but that are not ultimately consumed.

*Guideline for the Production of Compost in Ontario*: means the guideline developed by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to assist proponents of composting facilities, ministry staff and others in the siting, design, and approval of composting facilities. It also provides guidance on the production of compost based on engineering principles, practical experience, and current legislation, to protect public health and the environment (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/guideline-production-compost-ontario>).

*Hospital:* means an operator of a public hospital to which section 13 of O. Reg. 103/94 under the Environmental Protection Act applies as it read immediately before the day this Policy Statement was issued.

*Hotel and motel:* means an owner of a hotel or motel to which section 12 of O. Reg. 103/94 under the Environmental Protection Act applies as it read immediately before the day this Policy Statement was issued.

*Imperfect produce:* refers to whole and fresh fruits and vegetables that do not meet conventional grade and other non-food safety standards set by packers or retailers whether due to the size, shape or appearance of the item (for example, the presence of blemishes or discolouration), but are otherwise safe to consume and are not affected by rot, mold, insect damage or other contamination.

*Large manufacturing establishment:* means an owner or operator of a large manufacturing establishment to which section 15 of O. Reg. 103/94 under the Environmental Protection Act applies as it read immediately before the day this Policy Statement was issued.

*Local municipality:* means a *single-tier municipality* or a *lower-tier municipality* (as defined in the Municipal Act, 2001).

*Lower-tier municipality:* means a municipality that forms part of an *upper-tier municipality* for municipal purposes (as defined in the Municipal Act, 2001).

*Mixed waste processing:* means *resource recovery* processes that recover *food waste* or *organic waste* from waste streams where *food and organic waste* is co-mingled with other wastes.

*Multi-unit residential building:* means an owner of a building to which section 10 of O. Reg. 103/94 under the Environmental Protection Act applies as it read immediately before the day this Policy Statement was issued.

*Municipalities:* are geographic areas whose inhabitants are incorporated (as defined in the Municipal Act, 2001).

*Northern Ontario:* means the territorial districts of Algoma, Cochrane, Kenora, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Rainy River, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Timiskaming and The Regional Municipality of Sudbury (as defined in O. Reg. 101/94 under the Environmental Protection Act).

*Office building:* means an owner of a building or group of buildings to which section 9 of O. Reg. 103/94 under the Environmental Protection Act applies as it read immediately before the day this Policy Statement was issued.

*Ontario's Compost Quality Standards*: means standards developed by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change for aerobic composting of organic waste materials, supported by regulatory amendments (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-compost-quality-standards>).

*Operator*: means the person in occupation or having the charge, management or control of a *resource recovery system*.

*Organic waste*: means inedible parts of plants and animals, as well as other organic material that may be processed along with *food waste*. Examples of *organic waste* can include but are not limited to leaf and yard waste, *compostable products and packaging*, soiled paper, diapers and pet waste.

*Owner*: means a person that is responsible for the establishment or operation of a *resource recovery system*, or the person that owns the land in or on which a waste disposal site is located.

*Resource recovery*: means the extraction of useful materials or other resources from things that might otherwise be waste, including through reuse, recycling, reintegration, regeneration or other activities. This includes the collection, handling, and processing of *food and organic waste* for *beneficial uses*. Although energy from waste and alternative fuels are permitted as waste management options, these methods are not considered *resource recovery*. The recovery of nutrients, such as *digestate* from *anaerobic digestion*, is considered *resource recovery*.

*Resource recovery system*: means any part of a *waste management system* that collects, handles, transports, stores or processes waste for *resource recovery* purposes, but does not include disposal.

*Restaurant*: means an owner of a restaurant to which section 11 of O. Reg. 103/94 under the Environmental Protection Act applies as it read immediately before the day this Policy Statement was issued.

*Retail shopping complex*: means an owner of a complex to which section 6 of O. Reg. 103/94 under the Environmental Protection Act applies as it read immediately before the day this Policy Statement was issued.

*Retail shopping establishment*: means an owner of an establishment to which section 5 of O. Reg. 103/94 under the Environmental Protection Act applies as it read immediately before the day this Policy Statement was issued.

*Single-tier municipality*: means a municipality, other than an *upper-tier municipality*, that does not form part of an *upper-tier municipality* for municipal purposes (as defined in the Municipal Act, 2001).

*Southern Ontario*: means the parts of Ontario other than *Northern Ontario* (as defined in O. Reg. 101/94 under the Environmental Protection Act).

*Upper-tier municipality*: means a *municipality* of which two or more *lower-tier municipalities* form part for municipal purposes (as defined in the Municipal Act, 2001).

*Urban settlement areas*: means urban areas within *municipalities* (such as cities, towns, and villages) that are built up areas where development is concentrated and which have a mix of land uses.

*Waste management systems*: means any facilities or equipment used in, and any operations carried out for the management of waste including the collection, handling, transportation, storage, processing or disposal of waste, and may include one or more waste disposal sites.

*Waste reduction*: means the minimization of waste generated at the end of life of products or packaging, including through activities related to design, manufacturing and material use (as defined in the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016).