

# ONTARIO'S FOOD AND ORGANIC WASTE FRAMEWORK







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Minister of the  
Environment and  
Climate Change

## Minister's Statement

Have you ever really thought about the amount of garbage we throw out? Each person in Ontario is responsible for 850 kilograms per year. It's something we can't ignore; we have to deal with our waste. The planet doesn't have endless resources and we've all seen the images of our rivers and oceans filling up with plastic and other packaging. Here in Ontario, our waste diversion rate has been stuck at 25 per cent for the last decade. We know we can do better.

That's why Ontario is confronting the challenge and harnessing the opportunities of waste. Our Strategy for a Waste-Free Ontario is helping to build a circular economy where nothing is wasted and everything has a value. Dealing with our food and organic waste is a key part of building a circular economy.

Discarded organics are a significant source of greenhouse gas pollution; five per cent of Ontario's total emissions come from waste. Our Food and Organic Waste Framework will help to fight climate change, recover resources, create cleantech jobs, reduce landfills, cut pollution and help build Ontario's low-carbon economy.

## Up to 50% of food waste is avoidable

The average household throws out 125 kg of food waste per year



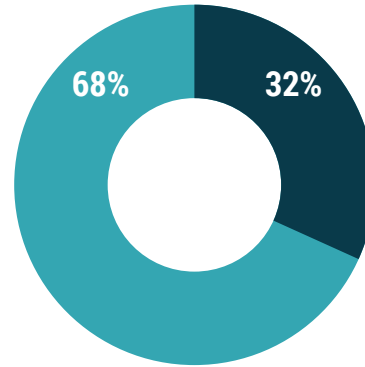
**That is more than 300 meals!**

## Food Should Never be Wasted!

Ontario residents generate a lot of food and organic waste – 3.7 million tonnes, every year. It is roughly equivalent to filling up Toronto’s SkyDome five times! It comes from our homes, our offices, our businesses. And where does it go? All too often, straight into a landfill.

### ONTARIO’S WASTE STREAM

**7.9 million tonnes of other materials** such as printed paper, packaging, electronics and household hazardous waste



**3.7 million tonnes of food and other organic wastes** such as food scraps, soiled paper, and leaf and yard wastes

*Source: Adapted from Reports on Organic Waste Management in Ontario, prepared for the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, 2015. Note - biosolids are not captured in this chart*

## Reducing and Recovering Food and Organic Waste in Ontario

It is estimated that more than 2 million tonnes of food and organic waste is sent to landfills every year in Ontario. When it gets there, it immediately begins contributing to climate change. As it breaks down, it creates methane, a greenhouse gas that is 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

In addition, all this food and organic waste takes up space. The way we are going now, Ontario will need 16 new or expanded landfills by 2050. That's why we are taking action to reduce the staggering amount of food and organic waste we generate at our homes, our work and on the go.

We have created a Food and Organic Waste Framework, which contains an Action Plan and a Policy Statement. The policy statement sets targets for municipalities, businesses, schools and hospitals to help us reach our ambitious waste reduction and resource recovery goals.

## The overall goals of the Food and Organic Waste Framework are to:

- *Reduce food and organic waste*
- *Recover resources from food and organic waste*
- *Support resource recovery infrastructure*
- *Promote beneficial uses of recovered organic resources*

## Let's Put Food and Organic Waste to Good Use

Turning food and organic waste into compost, digestate, or other valuable products creates both economic and environmental benefits, such as improving soil health and reducing erosion. The framework also promotes the development of renewable natural gas and electricity that can help replace carbon-intensive fossil fuels.

Keeping food and organic waste out of landfills can help us fight climate change by reducing greenhouse gas pollution.

It's very simple – food and organic waste can either contribute to climate change and lead to more landfills, or it can contribute to a stronger economy and a healthier environment.

If we doubled Ontario's current recovery rate of food and organic waste, that would be equivalent to removing approximately 260,000 cars from Ontario roads each year.



**Which would you choose?**

**OR**

**26,000,000 shopping carts of food waste sent to landfill**

**backyard composting**

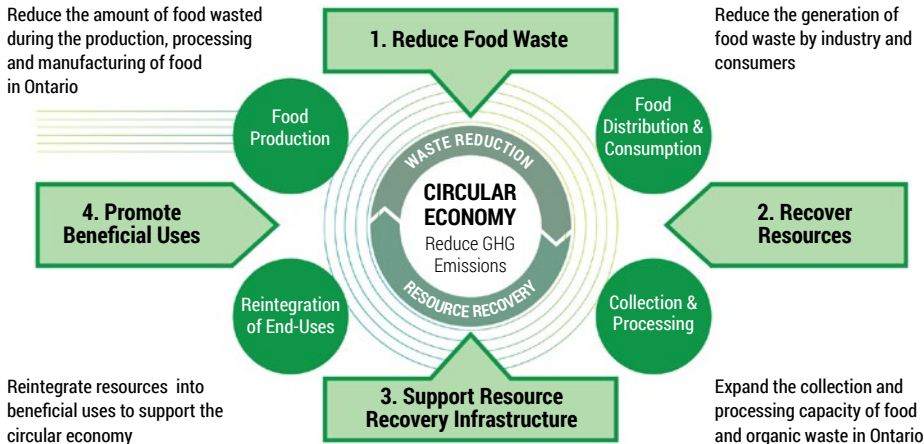


# Moving to a Circular Economy

The Province of Ontario is moving to what is called a circular economy. This is a system that aims to eliminate waste, get the most value from products by reusing them, recycling materials into new products and extending their lives for as long as possible.

The Food and Organic Waste Framework is a big part of the circular economy. In a linear economy, large volumes of food and organic resources are wasted and nothing is done about it.

Ontario is creating a less wasteful economy that protects the environment by recovering resources and reducing pollution.



Collecting and recovering 1,000 tonnes of food and organic waste has been shown to generate 60 per cent more GDP and 40 per cent more jobs than disposal



**Flashfood** is an app that alerts users when participating grocery stores need to sell food immediately at a deeply discounted price to prevent it from being thrown out. The app allows shoppers to save money and helps grocery stores prevent waste. In its initial year, Flashfood reports they diverted more than 12,000 meals from landfills. The organization's new Flashfoodbox program saves local farm produce rejected by retailers and sells it direct to consumers.

**Second Harvest** is the largest food rescue organization in Canada. They work across the supply chain from farmer to retail to capture surplus food before it ends up in landfills. Second Harvest rescues food from more than 470 donors and delivers it through social service agencies in Toronto and food hubs across Ontario, providing enough food for 30,000 meals a day. Since 1985, Second Harvest has rescued and delivered more than 57,000 tonnes of food, thereby preventing more than 31,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions from entering the atmosphere.



**The Region of Peel's** Integrated Waste Management Facility in Brampton is home to a primary composting operation that processes up to 60,000 tonnes of food and organic waste per year. The facility mixes green bin waste with shredded leaf and yard waste, composting all of it together. The output from this facility is taken to the Region's curing facility in Caledon.

**Bio-en Power** is a renewable energy company specializing in Anaerobic Digesters. These break down biodegradable materials to generate electricity and produce fertilizer. The company's facility in Elmira, Ontario, processes 70,000 tonnes of organic waste every year.



# So What's the Plan?

## Reduce Food and Organic Waste

- Working with partners to develop promotion and education tools aimed at reducing food waste
- Helping rescue and safely donate surplus food, so it doesn't go to waste
- Directing food retailers and businesses to reduce food waste in their own operations
- Working with schools to educate children on preventing and reducing food waste
- Enhancing our understanding of food and organic waste through research

## Recover Resources from Food and Organic Waste

- Establishing targets for municipalities, multi-residential buildings, businesses, schools and hospitals to recover up to 70 per cent of their food and organic waste by 2025
- Banning food and organic waste from disposal
- Expanding food waste collection systems across Ontario
- Increasing food and organic waste recovery in multi-residential buildings
- Amending the 3Rs regulations to increase recovery rates across the industrial, commercial and institutional sector

## Support Resource Recovery Infrastructure

- Improving planning and approvals to help the waste management industry more effectively process food and organic waste

## Promote Beneficial Uses of Recovered Organic Resources

- Promoting beneficial uses of recovered organic resources

# Prevent and Reduce Waste at Home

## Tips for managing food and organic waste:



### Plan ahead

Spending some time each week on meal planning can help you not only keep on budget at the grocery store, but also help you avoid buying what you don't need.



### Store it right

Store perishable foods in the refrigerator and dry goods and canned items in a cool, dry place. Meats, poultry and fish should be frozen if not being used right away. Set your refrigerator at the right temperature, four degrees or lower.



### Use it up

Eat the most perishable food early in the week and use your leftovers. Freeze what you don't eat. Fruits and vegetables past their prime can often be revived with a few minutes in ice water, and are always great in soups, sauces and smoothies.



### Recover what's left

Make use of your green bin (food scraps, paper towels, napkins and tissues can all go in) or think about home composting instead.

