

EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY



BACKGROUND INFO

Nova Scotia transferred responsibility for managing certain kinds of waste from municipalities to the producers of these materials in December 2025. This is known as “Extended Producer Responsibility” (EPR).

This change applied to Packaging and Paper Products (PPP), such as cardboard, paper, boxboard, and hard plastics. Flexible plastics, some aerosols and polystyrene have also been added to the materials collected for which producers of such materials are now responsible. Circular Materials is the organization representing producers that is responsible for PPP.

Nova Scotia has long been a national leader in diverting waste from landfills through recycling and composting, starting in 1996. The Province also has a landfill ban on corrugated cardboard, newsprint, and specific plastic/container types, the only province besides PEI to have such a ban.

EPR applies to waste generated by residential properties and other eligible facilities such as multi-residential, schools and campgrounds. As well, small institutional, commercial and industrial (IC&I) properties can receive limited curbside service.

IMPORTANCE TO NOVA SCOTIAN MUNICIPALITIES

Waste management is a core municipal responsibility that requires significant resources. The Province specifies municipal waste management responsibilities in the *Environment Act* and its Solid Waste-Resource Management Regulations.

How municipalities fulfill their waste management responsibilities are also outlined in local by-laws and policies. These can vary on factors like contracting out responsibilities to the private sector, co-ordinating services with municipal neighbours, service frequency, and ownership and management of facilities.

The implementation of EPR is expected to reduce municipal costs and reduce waste.



NSFM ADVOCACY AND RESEARCH

NSFM advocacy for the implementation of EPR started in 2010 following resolutions from the Town of Bridgewater and Municipality of the District of Shelburne. Sustained advocacy and co-ordination efforts followed thereafter, especially through membership in the Municipal Provincial Solid Waste Resource Priorities group.

In 2018, NSFM renewed its call to implement EPR in Nova Scotia and in response the Province of Nova Scotia asked NSFM to conduct consultation on a draft proposal to fund and operate EPR in the Province. In 2019 the proposal for EPR was submitted to the Province by the municipal Regional Chairs Committee, in partnership with NSFM.

In 2021 the Government of Nova Scotia committed to implementing EPR in the Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act.

The transition to EPR began shortly afterwards, and EPR regulations were eventually made under section 102 of the *Environment Act* and became effective on August 1, 2023. Following two years of planning and coordination between municipalities and other key actors, implementation began on December 1, 2025.

NEXT STEPS

Municipalities will continue to share information, provide support during the transition for EPR, identify issues and seek solutions. Municipalities will also continue to be responsible for non-recyclable materials (landfill) and organics.

NSFM will monitor EPR implementation and collaborate with municipalities to enhance effectiveness as required. A key group is the Nova Scotia Regional Chairs Waste Management Committee, which is a forum for the province's municipalities to share information, identify issues and collaborate to support EPR and all waste management functions. The organization Divert NS is responsible for the administration of the EPR program and will track and report on progress.

There are limitations to EPR implementation in Nova Scotia that will require attention going forward. For example, it does not apply to larger commercial waste producers who remain responsible for managing their own recyclable waste. Sharps (e.g. needles) are another category of waste not covered by EPR in Nova Scotia which is a challenge for municipalities. Another challenge is that some materials (e.g. flexible plastics) are not collected at households and must be taken to an approved depot (or can still be sent to landfills), which limits recycling potential.

The Province sets Minimum Material Management targets in its Material Management Standard. A key next step will be tracking progress towards those targets. Recycling materials like flexible plastics is expected to be a challenge.