

Operational Services Briefing to

Regular Meeting of Council

2023 December 12

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Extended Producer Responsibility Update

PURPOSE OF BRIEFING

This briefing will provide an overview of Alberta's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program and how an EPR program differs from and may impact the current Blue Cart and Household Hazardous Waste Programs. Further planned communications and decision points with Council are outlined in Attachment 1. The timing of Council decisions and updates will be refined as the approach and deadlines of Alberta's EPR system are established.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Extended Producer Responsibility is a provincial policy that shifts the financial and operational responsibility for collecting, sorting, processing and recycling of blue cart and select household hazardous waste materials to producers, such as manufacturers and retailers, and away from local governments.

Through Councillor Demong and the Association of Alberta Municipalities, and with The City of Edmonton, The City has advocated for this provincial policy for many years because of the anticipated environmental and financial benefits. Specifically, EPR should motivate producers to design and produce less packaging waste, choose materials that are less toxic and easier to recycle, and take advantage of economies of scale to make recycling more effective and efficient.

The design and implementation of the provincial EPR system is currently in progress. Extended Producer Responsibility Regulation AR 194/2022 came into effect in November 2022 and provincial EPR systems will become operational in April 2025.

The Government of Alberta is introducing Extended Producer Responsibility for two streams of designated materials across the province: Packaging and Paper Products (PPP), which we know as blue cart materials, and Hazardous and Special Products (HSP), some of what we currently call household hazardous waste. Examples of both streams of materials are included in Attachment 2.

Before the end of the year, The City will register as a 'Community' in the EPR system to keep our options open and retain the ability to access producer-funded EPR for single family dwellings in April 2025. Completing this administrative step provides Council the ability to make a decision on continuing the transition to EPR next year.

If The City moves forward in participating in the provincial EPR program with Council's direction, it is with the understanding that responsibilities and authority for managing these material streams will change.

The next two sections outline the differences between Calgary's current Blue Cart and Household Hazardous Waste programs and how the provincial EPR programs will operate.

Regulation and Oversight

Alberta's EPR program:

- specifies that producers are responsible for managing Hazardous and Special Products and Packaging and Paper Products generated by single-family dwellings starting in April 2025. Multi-family dwellings are also considered in the EPR regulation and are eligible for producer-provided service by October 2026.

- standardizes the list of recyclable materials accepted across the province and could change the types of material Calgarians are able to recycle.

The City will retain authority to enact bylaws related to waste management, including bylaws that complement EPR and make sure other materials that are not regulated by The Province are managed responsibly. Committee and Council will not have a direct role in approving or overseeing the operations of collection and recycling programs for materials that are included in the provincial EPR program. Producers will be responsible to the Alberta Government to meet recycling targets for those materials, and Council will no longer have authority, accountability or responsibility for them. Further detail on authorities and responsibilities in Alberta's EPR program are illustrated in Attachment 2.

Role	Current state	Future state (With EPR)
Regulator	Council	The Province
Oversight	Committee / Council	EPR administrator designated by The Province

The provincial EPR policy framework is still under development. In an effort to make sure that the system meets the needs and expectations of Calgarians, Waste & Recycling Services is continuing to provide input and advocate to provincial regulators and the Alberta Recycling Management Authority to inform the design of EPR policies, codes and standards.

Service Design, Delivery and Funding

Producers are anticipated to enlist Producer Responsibility Organizations (or PROs, which are non-profit organizations that provide collection, processing and administrative services) to help meet their regulatory obligations. In Alberta's Extended Producer Responsibility system, PROs will support producers in operating the recycling systems and will contract for the collection and processing of the materials included in the EPR program. Producers will be responsible for funding the end-of-life management for these material streams, shifting some of those costs away from The City and Calgarians.

Role	Current state	Future state (With EPR)
Funder	Calgarians	Producers
Service design	Waste & Recycling Services	Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs) on behalf of Producers
Service delivery	Waste & Recycling Services	Service providers contracted by PROs

Administration believes the best and most seamless option for service delivery for Calgarians is for Waste & Recycling Services to continue as the collection service provider for EPR material streams. We have the expertise, people, equipment, and facilities, and can continue providing the same high-quality services Calgarians rely on. Under a provincial EPR program, City-provided services would help to ensure that these programs continue to meet the intent of Extended Producer Responsibility and The City's environmental goals. We will continue to keep Council up-to-date as the process progresses and more information is available on program and service delivery options.

As the provincial EPR system takes shape, we will analyze service model options, including service delivery and cost implications, and will continue to measure and manage risks using The City's enterprise risk framework prior to seeking Council direction on the path forward. We are monitoring Extended Producer Responsibility implementation and on-going programs in other jurisdictions such as British Columbia and Ontario and learnings from other major municipalities will inform our approach and future recommendations. We will report back to Committee no later than Q2 2024 with an update on the results of our discussions with the Producer Responsibility Organizations and will seek Council's direction on the path forward.

Engagement:

We have been coordinating our advocacy efforts with Alberta Municipalities and the City of Edmonton. We have begun building relationships with provincial regulators and Producer Responsibility Organizations. Internally, we have been supported by Intergovernmental Relations, Law, and Enterprise Risk Management. Waste & Recycling Services is communicating with employees and internal partners and will continue to engage with Council about the Extended Producer Responsibility framework as it takes shape. We will have ongoing engagement with staff on the steps being taken to establish Waste & Recycling Services as the future service provider and support a seamless transition to Extended Producer Responsibility for Calgarians and employees.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Extended Producer Responsibility Timeline
2. EPR Council Infographic

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General Manager Doug Morgan concurs with the information in this Briefing.