



Industry and Municipal Partnership Releases Flexible Films Plastics Packaging Diversion Report

June 3, 2013

The **Canadian Plastics Industry Association**, the **Continuous Improvement Fund** and **Stewardship Ontario** are pleased to announce the release of their [report on the flexible film plastics packaging](#). The joint project, initiated in the fall of 2012 examined the current and potential future options for post use flexible film collection, processing and sorting and end uses.

The CPIA, CIF and SO, jointly retained a consulting consortium comprised of Reclay StewardEdge, Resource Recycling Systems and Moore Recycling Associates to accomplish the undertaking. Advisory support was provided by Pac Next, which coordinated the provision of technical information from its membership.

Plastic films currently represent around 35% of the plastics packaging stream in Ontario with some types of flexible films growing at rates of over 5% annually. Given the volume and growth, there is an increased interest and need to ensure this packaging stream is effectively managed after use. To that end, the project took a first time specific assessment of the current barriers, opportunities and associated costs to collect and process flexible film plastics packaging.

The objectives of this project were to:

- Conduct a comprehensive study of flexible film packaging in the marketplace and in Ontario households to understand what is available and recyclable today and the issues at material recycling facilities and at plastic re-processors;
- Identify available commercial and upcoming pre-commercial technologies that can sort film in a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) or at a re-processing operation;
- Identify possible packaging design changes to increase recyclability; and
- Assess the cost drivers and associated costs to collect film both at both curbside and at return centres for recycling and recovery.

The findings were extensive and can be found in the report on the project partners' web sites. The report is intended to provide a basis for informed decision-making by governments and industry in their joint efforts to improve the recyclability and diversion of flexible film plastics from landfill.

Highlights of report findings are as follows:

- There is excess recycling capacity in North American for clean polyethylene film (PE) being generated today.
- To promote greater recycling of flexible films, in the short term, efforts should be focused on collecting clean PE stream separately,.
- Return centres for PE based collection proved to be the most cost effective option to provide a clean source although with lower recovery rates compared to curbside collection.
- Curbside collection of PE film, on the other hand, can achieve higher recovery levels but requires further development of additional domestic wash capacity.
- Collecting mixed films with PE film, at this time, is not economically viable due to the lack of cost effective sorting technologies and end market uses.
- However, mixed films can be used as an energy source or converted to a fuel for which there is excess demand.

The [report](#) is an excellent resource to government and industry. The subject of effective flexible film packaging diversion will need continued attention. The parties to this study anticipate continuing to work together to address the barriers/opportunities identified and undertake further initiatives to increase the recycling and recovery of plastics film packaging and promote best practices.

For further information on this project, contact:

Canadian Plastics Industry Association: Darlene Gray, dgray@plastics.ca

Continuous Improvement Fund: Mike Birett, mbirett@wdo.ca

Stewardship Ontario: Rick Denyes, rdenyes@stewardshipontario.ca

The Canadian Plastics Industry Association is the national voice of Canada's plastics industry dedicated to improve the sustainability of plastics by working in partnership with stakeholders to increase the diversion of plastics from landfill. www.plastics.ca

The Continuous Improvement Fund (CIF) is a program developed through a partnership between the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, City of Toronto, Stewardship Ontario and Waste Diversion Ontario. Its mandate is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Ontario's municipal blue box programs. <http://cif.wdo.ca/>

Stewardship Ontario is an independent, industry-funded organization mandated under the Waste Diversion Act. Stewardship Ontario manages two waste diversion programs in Ontario - the blue box program, which provides municipalities with funding to support the residential recycling of paper and packaging; and the Orange Drop program, which manages the collection and recovery of hazardous and special waste materials through municipal and commercial locations. www.stewardshipontario.ca