

Ontario carton recycling rate continues to increase

In 2012 the provincial recycling rate increased by over 10 per cent

Toronto, ON (January 14, 2014): A recent review of recycling rates in Ontario indicates that the province is taking positive steps to increase the amount of cartons recycled annually. In 2012, the provincial recycling rate increased by over 10 per cent, moving from a rate of 26 per cent to 38 per cent in a year. In weight that is 7,788 tonnes of cartons, a 54 per cent increase from 2011. This increase in Ontario also helped increase the national recycling rate from 39 per cent to 41 per cent. We are seeing a positive growth trend nationally – 41 per cent in 2013 from 26 per cent in 2008 – and the Carton Council of Canada (CCC) remains committed to continuing to grow this rate aggressively by focusing on recycling education and optimizing the end-of-life management of used cartons.

“The Carton Council of Canada applauds the Ontario municipalities and local businesses for supporting the Ontario Blue Box Program Plan recycling system and for their continued effort to increase carton recycling rates,” says Elisabeth Comere, VP, Government Affairs, Carton Council of Canada. “The recent improvement is encouraging and a positive sign of continued progress to come.”

When you look at increases in the volumes of different materials being recycled, cartons are leading the pack. In 2012, aseptic and gable top cartons experienced the second and third highest percentage increases in volumes recycled, despite the recycling system experiencing a decrease of one per cent. The recycling system in Ontario saw a continued decrease in heavy materials, such as glass and printed papers, while the collection of lightweight, higher volume material such as plastic bottles, milk cartons, juice cartons, aluminum and steel increased.

“The Carton Council of Canada wants to make sure that Canadians take advantage of all opportunities to properly recycle all types of cartons,” says Comere. “The progress in Ontario is encouraging, however only 38 per cent of cartons nation-wide are recycled, while 96 per cent of Canadians have access to residential beverage carton recycling. There is more work to be done and we look forward to continuing efforts, working with industry partners like Stewardship Ontario, Recycling Council of Ontario, and similarly run programs in other Canadian provinces.”

“It’s important to focus on all sectors where our products are consumed, and that’s why we’ve established a partnership with the Recycling Council of Ontario, given their broad reach into schools via their Waste-Free Lunch Challenge Program”, says Comere.

“The Carton Council of Canada is a major supporter of the annual Waste-Free Lunch Challenge, which promotes waste reduction and diversion in schools across Ontario by encouraging the use of reusable containers and recyclable packaging as part of their lunch,” says Jo-Anne St. Godard,

Executive Director, Recycling Council of Ontario. “The Challenge works to establish smart consumption and waste reduction habits early on to foster life-long environmental awareness of participating students.”

A breakdown of the recycling rate of different types of cartons indicates that there might be confusion about the recyclability of certain carton types. While the recycling rate of refrigerated cartons, also referred to as gable top cartons, is at 48 per cent, the recycling rate of shelf stable cartons such as juice cartons is only at 16 per cent. The difference in tonnage is significant; in 2012 Ontario recycled 955 tonnes of shelf stable cartons and 6,833 tons of gable top cartons. In order for more cartons to be recycled, confusion about recyclability needs to be eliminated and consumers and recyclers need to make sure that cartons are collected at the curb or redeemed in beverage container deposit programs.

The CCC believes that in order for more cartons to be recycled, confusion about the recyclability needs to be eliminated. The council will continue to focus on consumer, recycler and customer education to make sure all cartons sizes, from single serve juice cartons to large milk cartons, find their way to the recycling bin, get collected, are properly sorted and baled at the municipal recycling facilities.

The CCC will continue to engage municipalities, sorters and recyclers to support carton recycling, educate Canadians, motivating them to use their recycling facilities. The council will play a role in increasing carton recycling rates through the following activities:

1. Data gathering to determine where cartons are going after they have been used;
2. Coordinating local focus groups with municipality members to learn more about what needs to be done in their area to help increase recycling;
3. Advising city councillors on the benefits of carton recycling and
4. Facilitating partnerships between recyclers and end market producers who value the fibre.

ABOUT THE CARTON COUNCIL OF CANADA

The Carton Council of Canada represents the leading carton manufacturing companies in Canada, including Elopak, Evergreen Packaging, SIG Combibloc and Tetra Pak. These companies manufacture and market processing and packaging systems that are convenient, safe and environmentally sound. Carton Council of Canada endeavours to advance sustainable recycling solutions in Canada by promoting both recycling technology and local collection programs to divert cartons from landfills. Carton Council of Canada is a part of Carton Council North America. For more information, please visit RecycleCartons.ca.

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