

Green Manitoba

Taking 'reduce, recycle' to the next level

Courtesy of Green Manitoba

Environmental stewardship is everyone's responsibility. It is impossible to argue against the importance of protecting our natural resources, water, air quality and, of course, our farms and communities. Manitoba's municipalities are leaders in environmental responsibility and many have set high standards for sustainable waste management and other green initiatives that reduce the amount of materials destined for landfills.

The Waste Reduction and Recycling Support (WRARS) Levy announced in the provincial budget has gotten people talking about this important issue. The purpose of the new levy is to encourage sustainable waste management and to improve waste diversion in landfills through recycling, composting and other activities. If it continues to be so much cheaper to throw a newspaper in a landfill than to recycle it, there is no incentive for non-recyclers to change their habits.

The \$10 per tonne levy will only be applied in 2009 at Class 1 landfills that accept more than 30,000 tonnes of waste per year. This includes the four largest landfills around Winnipeg and Brandon. The remaining Class 1 landfills have been given additional time to implement and administer the levy and will start in January 2010.

Class 2 and 3 landfills will be subject to the levy beginning January 2011. This will give municipalities time to plan, especially those municipalities that operate multiple landfills and that want to investigate other options such as converting landfills to waste transfer stations. A guidance manual will be developed for Class 2 and 3 landfills that will provide a method to convert waste volumes to weight for reporting purposes avoiding the need for each landfill to install weigh scales.

Amendments to Manitoba's Waste Reduction and Prevention (WRAP) Act establish a dedicated fund, the Waste Reduction and Recycling Support

(WRARS) Fund to hold the WRARS Levy revenue. The WRARS Fund will be managed by Green Manitoba, a special operating agency of the Province of Manitoba.

Eighty percent of the revenue collected from the levy will be paid back to municipalities based on the level of recycling achieved. Municipalities that are able to achieve high rates of recycling and diversion of waste from landfills may be able to receive more back than they paid out. Funding currently provided to municipalities through the Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation and in the near future through Multi-Material Stewardship Manitoba will be maintained. Smaller municipalities that operate Class 2 and 3 landfills have more time to increase their recycling numbers before the levy kicks in. The other 20 percent of revenue will go towards the enhanced e-waste and household hazardous waste programs in Manitoba that municipalities and their rate-payers directly benefit from.

Municipalities are not being told how to administer the levy. Some municipalities are already excellent recyclers and may choose to support other programs with the additional revenue they receive from the WRARS program. Other municipalities that do less recycling, will hopefully look at ways to improve their recycling numbers.

Municipalities have the opportunity to continue their leadership in greening Manitoba. Landfills are an important and necessary municipal infrastructure and the levy will help municipalities protect their infrastructure and preserve the environment. 🌱



Green Manitoba's Jim Ferguson presented the new WRARS program during the 2009 Municipal Officials Seminar.

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Contact Miller Environmental today for more information on planning your community's household hazardous waste collection day.



For further information please contact Jim Ferguson at Green Manitoba (Phone: 204-945-7042 or Email: jim.ferguson@gov.mb.ca).