

Proposed Transition for Residential Blue Bin Recycling

Project Overview

The Manitoba government is reviewing a proposed plan to transition the responsibility for delivering residential recycling services for packaging and printed paper (commonly referred to as blue bin material) from municipalities and Indigenous communities to Multi-Material Stewardship Manitoba (MMSM) and the industry stewards they represent. Under this industry-funded recycling model, known as “full” extended producer responsibility, industry would assume the full operational and financial responsibility for collecting and recycling residential blue bin materials in Manitoba.

As part of the approval process for this transition, the Manitoba government provided the public with the opportunity to review and comment on MMSM’s proposed transition plan. Manitoba sought feedback on how MMSM proposed to work with municipalities and Indigenous communities to transition existing responsibilities and service levels of blue bin programs to MMSM over a multi-year period.

Manitoba Environment, Climate and Parks provides regulatory oversight of MMSM’s program and their transition plan proposal requires the approval of the Minister of Environment, Climate and Parks. Comments received through this public engagement process will help inform the department’s review of the proposed transition plan.

Engagement Overview

The purpose of the public engagement was to provide the public with the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed transition plan so that the Minister could consider feedback prior to making a decision on whether or not to approve the plan.

In developing their proposed transition plan, MMSM conducted a number of consultations in 2021 targeting key stakeholder groups including industry stewards (manufacturers, distributors, and retailers), municipal and Indigenous communities and organizations, federal and provincial government departments, and other organizations. MMSM outlined their consultation activities and feedback received on their proposed transition plan, which was submitted along with the transition plan for the department’s review. Environment, Climate and Parks and other subject matter experts from across government reviewed the Transition Plan and provided initial feedback for MMSM’s consideration and revision. MMSM submitted a revised plan to the department in spring 2022.

The proposed transition plan was posted to EngageMB for public consultation during July 11 to August 15, 2022. The public was invited to review MMSM’s proposed transition plan and to

submit their comments. The department received 51 written comments from a mix of individuals, municipalities, environmental organizations and industry groups. Most feedback was provided by respondents in Manitoba, followed by other Canadian provinces and one respondent in the United States.

What We Heard

The department received a range of comments on the transition plan. All stakeholder groups supported the polluter pays approach, in which producers are responsible for the end-of-life management of their products. Feedback also supported increasing the recovery of packaging and printed paper in Manitoba, reducing waste sent to landfill. There was general support for consistent recycling standards throughout the province. Industry groups supported harmonizing stewardship programs across Canadian jurisdictions, including the move to full extended producer responsibility for residential packaging and printed paper recycling. Municipalities and industry highlighted the need for consistent, ongoing education of any changes to recycling to all impacted stakeholders.

Municipal and Community Matters

Municipal stakeholders highlighted the importance of program transparency and ensuring communities are not faced with additional administrative or financial burdens as a result of a transition. They expressed that they would like additional financial details and information about the formal processes for how MMSM would work with municipalities and communities during the transition. Municipalities, environmental groups and individuals were interested in how the transition would impact operational aspects of existing recycling programs, such as managing multi-year contracts, service interruptions, public education, and enforcement. The need for fair and transparent processes to reach mutual agreements on changes, without enacting the transition's plan's proposed dispute resolution process, was highlighted. A key theme was the need for municipal and community input into decisions.

Industry Matters

Some industry stakeholders opposed the fee exemptions to small businesses, suggesting instead that all producers pay a flat fee into MMSM's program. Several industry groups also suggested accounting for the whole product lifecycle for greenhouse gas reporting, instead of only the end-of-life carbon footprint.

Next Steps

Manitoba will be one of the first provinces in Canada to transition from a shared responsibility model to a full responsibility model for blue bin materials. As a next step towards this model, the department will ask MMSM to revise their plan based on feedback received. Once the plan is updated it will be reviewed by the Minister of Environment, Climate and Parks. To ensure a smooth transition, Manitoba will continue to listen to feedback from stakeholders and regularly meet with MMSM and municipal, community and other key stakeholders to monitor the transition to full extended producer responsibility.

Active Offer Statement

This information is available in an alternate format on request. Please contact stewardship-plans@gov.mb.ca

Questions?

Please contact stewardship-plans@gov.mb.ca.