



# Saskatchewan Solid Waste Management Strategy

Discussion Paper  
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# Introduction

The Ministry of Environment is engaging with community stakeholders and First Nations to spearhead the development of a *Solid Waste Management Strategy* to help address all the items in our province that we commonly refer to as 'waste' – garbage, trash, rubbish, effluent, refuse and scrap materials. The strategy will serve as Saskatchewan's roadmap for waste reduction and management by outlining long-term goals and actions to support change. It will contribute to the management and protection of Saskatchewan's environment for the well-being of the province, its people and its

future. The strategy will reflect the Saskatchewan *Plan for Growth: 2020 and Beyond*, to invest in infrastructure and programs in order to address the challenges of growth and protect the environment.

Amongst provinces, Saskatchewan has the second highest waste disposal rate at 897 kilograms per person, while only 13 percent of waste is diverted from landfills, the lowest in Canada. Improper disposal of solid waste contributes to environmental impacts and public health risks, through potential environmental

contamination and the accumulation of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere. As Saskatchewan communities grow, the Government of Saskatchewan will need to continually adapt its environmental management practices to address the challenges of growth and protect the environment.

Engagement is key to promoting responsible resource management aimed at public safety and environmental sustainability.

## Saskatchewan's Current State

### Legislation and Regulations

The Ministry of Environment regulates waste management and enforces landfill and transfer station compliance through province-wide legislation under *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010* (EMPA). The ministry has established requirements and practices for solid waste management in Saskatchewan, including issuing permits (to construct, expand, operate, and close a landfill), monitoring results, performing inspections, and enforcing legislation. Municipal landfills and transfer stations are currently regulated by *The Municipal Refuse Management Regulations* (MRMR). Hazardous waste landfills, industrial and private landfills, and recycling and composting facilities are regulated under *The Environmental*

*Management and Protection (General) Regulations*. Landfills are considered potentially contaminated sites and their closure and decommissioning are subject to the Site Assessment and Corrective Action Plan chapters of the *Saskatchewan Environmental Code*.

In addition, all regulated waste stewardship and recycling programs are established under EMPA, including:

- *The Environmental Management and Protection (General) Regulations;*
- *The Used Petroleum and Antifreeze Products Collection Regulations;*
- *The Waste Electronics Equipment Regulations;*
- *The Waste Paint Management Regulations;*

- *The Scrap Tire Management Regulations;*
- *The Household Packaging and Paper Stewardship Program Regulations; and*
- *The Agricultural Packaging Product Waste Stewardship Regulations.*

Landfills and transfer stations located on First Nation reserves are federally regulated under the Indian Reserve Waste Disposal Regulations and do not fall within the scope of EMPA or MRMR. Nonetheless, these facilities are a component that will be considered in the development of the Solid Waste Management Strategy.

# Saskatchewan's Waste Management – Current State

## Landfills and Transfer Stations

With 328 operational landfills, 155 transfer stations, 15 industrial landfills, and 356 closed landfills, Saskatchewan has more landfills per capita than any other Canadian province. Based on the Provincial Auditor recommendations from 2013, the ministry is strengthening its requirements for landfill construction, improving the monitoring of operating landfills, better overseeing landfill closures, and ensuring non-compliance issues are addressed consistently.

## Regional Waste Management Authorities

To meet future needs and regulatory requirements, some Saskatchewan municipalities have formed regional waste management partnerships, with responsibilities delegated to an authority which operates one

central facility. The authority is a separate legal entity, governed by a board, with voting representatives from member municipalities. The regional authority, funded by all participating municipalities, often takes on all aspects of waste management, including recycling and waste education.

Municipalities without access to a formalized regional waste authority have found other ways to work together. An increasing number of municipalities have hired private companies to manage their municipal solid waste. Conversely, some municipal landfills have made agreements with neighbouring municipalities to accept their waste for a fee. These municipalities voluntarily decide to work together within a geographic region without creating a legal entity. The ministry actively encourages and works

with communities to consider various long-term waste management solutions.

## Waste Stewardship and Recycling

Over the past 20 years, Saskatchewan has made progress in preventing waste from entering community landfills by encouraging waste reduction and recycling practices. The province has implemented several waste stewardship and recycling programs for a number of materials including beverage containers, paint, scrap tires, used oil, antifreeze, electronic waste, packaging and printed paper, and grain bags. In 2015, provincial recycling programs have diverted over 41,000 thousand tonnes of solid waste and over 19 million litres of liquid waste from Saskatchewan landfills (Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of 2015 Saskatchewan Waste Stewardship and Recycling Program Statistics

Recycled Material		2015
Used Oil and Antifreeze	19,270,541	Litres
Oil and Antifreeze Containers	460	Tonnes
Paint	422,941	Litres
Paint Containers	103	Tonnes
Scrap Tires	19,621	Tonnes
Waste Electronics	2,700	Tonnes
Beverage Containers	18,404	Tonnes
<b>Total Liquid Waste</b>	<b>19,693,482</b>	<b>Litres</b>
<b>Total Solid Waste</b>	<b>41,288</b>	<b>Tonnes</b>

In January 2016, *The Household Packaging and Paper Stewardship Program Regulations* came into force, launching the Multi-Material Recycling Program (MMRP). MMRP is a cost-sharing program between businesses and municipalities or First Nations to help pay for the collection and recycling of household packaging and paper materials. In 2016, Saskatchewan also launched *The Agricultural Packaging Product Waste Stewardship Regulations*, which build on the Ministry of Agriculture's pilot program and require grain bag producers to develop a recycling plan. As we move forward, expanding and developing Saskatchewan's stewardship programs will play a vital role in diverting waste, conserving resources, and reducing GHG emissions.

# Public Engagement

## Previous Engagement Efforts

During previous engagement efforts with stakeholders, including municipalities, First Nations, industry stewards, and non-government organizations, the ministry received valuable feedback regarding the development of a *Solid Waste Management Strategy*.

Many stakeholders agree that existing provincial recycling programs work well and are successfully diverting waste from Saskatchewan landfills. However, many would like to see recycling programs for a number of materials not currently included in provincial programs, such as household hazardous waste; large and small appliances; furniture and mattresses; organic waste; industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) waste; and construction, renovation and demolition (CRD) waste. In addition, industries continue to encourage Saskatchewan to have similar regulatory requirements for recycling programs to those of other provinces.

Stakeholders have also shared their concerns regarding current landfill management practices in Saskatchewan. The current *Municipal Refuse Management Regulations* are unclear, outdated, and not consistently enforced. These groups have expressed that rules and regulations must be consistently enforced to ensure a level playing field for all municipalities. In addition, many municipalities continue to convey concerns regarding a lack of capacity to develop, operate, maintain or decommission municipal landfills according to provincial regulations and waste management best practices.

To manage capacity issues and meet regulatory responsibilities, some municipalities have joined or formed regional waste management systems. A number of stakeholders recognize the long-term environmental and economic benefits of regional systems, but have identified a number of barriers, including financial constraints and geographic obstacles.

## Current Engagement Process

This discussion paper outlines the history and issues related to waste management as identified by the Government of Saskatchewan and previous engagement efforts. Discussion questions have been provided at the end of each subject area to help participants provide feedback during the engagement process. Feedback can be provided through written submissions or the ministry's online survey. Submissions will be accepted until the deadline on May 31, 2017.

Participants also have the option of attending strategy engagement workshops offered by the ministry in May 2017 in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert. Interested participants who cannot attend an in-person workshop may participate in an online engagement session.



# The Future of Solid Waste Management

The *Solid Waste Management Strategy* will affirm the government's commitment and direction regarding the management and diversion of solid waste in Saskatchewan. Our vision is to create a practical, sustainable, and integrated solid waste management system that considers best practices for waste reduction, disposal, economic development, innovation, and environmental protection.

To guide Saskatchewan's solid waste management efforts, a twofold process is proposed:

1. Develop a strategy that will provide the overarching framework to facilitate and encourage long-term waste management in Saskatchewan.
2. Develop short- and medium-term action plans to implement initiatives to reduce and/or manage solid waste.

Through research and past engagement efforts, the ministry has identified three strategic priorities for waste management that will help the province achieve measurable success.

## Landfill Management

Ensuring the use of waste management best practices to protect our environment and ensure safe and healthy Saskatchewan communities.

## Waste Stewardship and Recycling

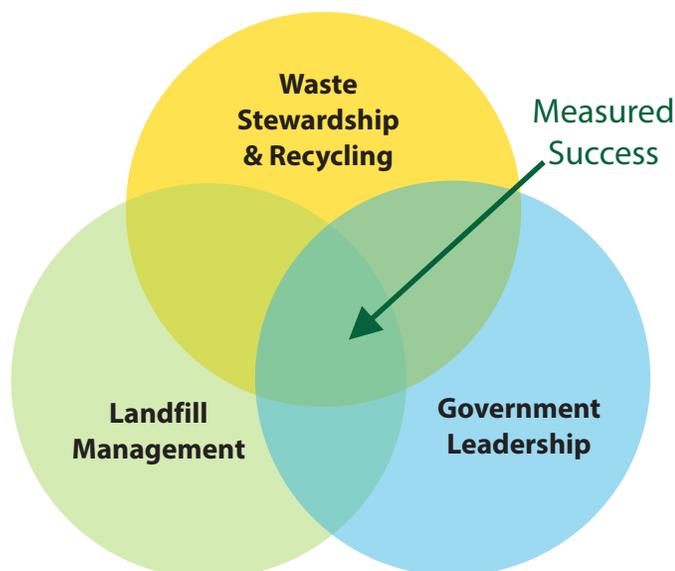
Developing and expanding waste stewardship and recycling programs will play a vital role in diverting waste from community landfills and transforming Saskatchewan into a national leader in responsible product stewardship.

## Government Leadership

As values, knowledge, and technologies change, the government will strive to encourage environmental management best practices, promote understanding of responsible solid waste management, ensure consistent enforcement and emphasize the importance of environmental protection.

After an overarching strategy is established, short- and medium-term action plans will be developed to implement initiatives and support the long-term goals and outcomes of the strategy. The action plans will provide greater flexibility and will allow for gradual development of programs that may initially focus on a smaller scope, and then build up capacity, confidence and support over time to address larger and more complex issues. Initially, the short-term action plans will focus on the management of municipal solid waste, including waste originating from residential, commercial, institutional, demolition, or construction sources. Medium-term action plans will flush out the details of managing other wastes, which may include hazardous, agricultural, or biomedical waste.

The ministry recognizes that landfills and transfer stations located on First Nation reserves do not fall within the scope of EMPA or Saskatchewan's refuse management regulations. However, the Government of Saskatchewan is interested in gaining a better understanding of the constraints and issues affecting landfill management on First Nation reserves and will work with First Nations, industry stewards, organizations, municipalities, and non-government organizations, to enhance access to waste diversion and recycling opportunities.



## Discussion Questions

1. Do you support the development of a Solid Waste Management Strategy for Saskatchewan? Why or why not?
2. How will the strategy impact you?
3. What positive or negative outcomes do you feel a strategy would achieve?
4. Do you agree with the three strategic priorities presented in this discussion paper? Why or why not?
5. What would be your top three goals and opportunities for a strategy in Saskatchewan?
6. Do you agree with the future of solid waste management as defined in this discussion paper? Why or why not?
7. What can we learn from experiences in other jurisdictions?

## Strategy Strategic Priorities

### Waste Stewardship and Recycling

Saskatchewan has established a number of successful waste stewardship and recycling programs to recycle beverage containers, paint and paint

containers, scrap tires, used oil, oil filters and containers, antifreeze, electronic waste, and packaging and printed paper. Our programs have been successful due to significant public participation and a high level of involvement from industry, local communities

and non-government organizations. As we move forward, Saskatchewan's stewardship programs will play a vital role in diverting waste, conserving resources, and reducing GHG emissions.

## Discussion Questions

1. What actions do you believe will support and increase waste stewardship and recycling?
2. Should the government mandate provincial waste diversion targets for stewardship programs?
3. Should there be regulated programs for the following materials: appliances; furniture; institutional, commercial and industrial waste (ICI); and construction, renovation and demolition waste (CRD).
4. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a policy approach in which producers are physically and/or financially responsible for the post-consumer stage of a product's lifecycle. EPR programs are grounded on the "polluter pays" principle by shifting the waste management burden from municipalities and taxpayers to a product's producers and consumers. Do you think EPR is the best way to manage current and future recycling programs?
  - a. If not, what other product stewardship models could ensure these materials are diverted from landfills and recycled responsibly?
5. How can the ministry enhance waste diversion and recycling in northern and remote communities?
6. How can the ministry enhance waste diversion and recycling on First Nation reserves?
7. Do you have feedback regarding the current stewardship and recycling programs and regulations?

## Landfill Management

The ministry regulates waste management and enforces compliance at all waste management facilities including landfills, transfer stations and compost facilities. Waste management facilities not compliant with EMPA or MRMR raise regulatory challenges for the ministry and may potentially

result in negative environmental impacts. In addition, facilities that have not taken a full-cost approach to the operation of their facilities may not charge appropriate user fees to cover the cost of construction, operation and decommissioning according to government regulations and industry best practices. Often, these minimal or non-existent waste disposal fees do not reflect

the potential environmental, social and human health costs of treating and disposing of waste. In addition, low user fees make landfill disposal an economical solution for waste generators, which provides little incentive for industry, manufacturers and consumers to reduce waste generation and get involved in resource recovery.

## Discussion Questions

1. What actions do you believe will support responsible and sustainable landfill management?
2. Do you think the MRMR for landfills and transfer stations need to be updated to reflect industry best practices? Why or why not?
  - a. What specific sections of MRMR create a barrier?
  - b. How could MRMR support innovation and new technology in waste management?
3. The *Saskatchewan Environmental Code* is a results-based regulatory approach that consolidates the chapters appended to EMPA and *The Forest Resource Management Regulations*. *The Landfills and Transfer Stations Chapters* of the code were removed from the first version of the code due to concerns raised by stakeholders. Do you think a subsequent version of the *Saskatchewan Environmental Code* should include chapters for landfills, transfer stations, recycling facilities, and/or compost facilities?
4. Do you think the government should encourage the closure and decommissioning of landfills that do not meet regulatory requirements?
5. What do you think about collaboration with other municipalities on solid waste management?
6. How do you feel about regional waste management authorities?
7. What are the constraints and issues affecting responsible landfill management in northern and remote communities?
8. What are the constraints and issues affecting responsible landfill management on First Nation reserves?
9. How can the ministry work with First Nations, northern and remote municipalities to address any of the constraints and issues you have identified above?
10. How should waste management initiatives be funded?

## Government Leadership

The ministry continually strives to improve practices, promote understanding of suitable solid waste management, and emphasize environmental protection. To do so, the strategy will foster stakeholder and First Nation participation through engagement, education, and knowledge transfer between stakeholders, First Nations and the ministry. It is essential that Saskatchewan residents

understand their collective impact on the environment and be actively participating in provincial waste management programs. Public education and awareness play an important role in fostering this acceptance and promoting personal action. With the implementation of the Solid Waste Management Strategy, the development of focused, Saskatchewan-specific education initiatives will become a priority.

In addition, the provincial government can lead by example

by reducing waste in its own operations and ensuring compliance of government-owned waste management facilities. Implementing sound environmental practices for the services provided by government can have far-reaching behavioural impacts in communities across the province. By changing our business practices, government can increase its volume of recyclable commodities.

## Discussion Questions

1. What actions do you believe will support government leadership?
2. How can the government best support municipalities and/or industry to promote waste management best practices?
3. Would a province-wide educational awareness campaign to explain the public's role in waste management promote changes in overall behavior and guide residents in making sound waste reduction-related decisions?
  - a. Who should the target audience be?



# Outcomes and Opportunities

Despite our current efforts to reduce waste and encourage responsible waste management, there is still much work to be done to make Saskatchewan a national leader. Saskatchewan's population growth and increased waste generation strains our existing solid waste management system. However, many opportunities will become available through the development of the *Solid Waste Management Strategy*.

## Environmental

Improper disposal of solid waste contributes to negative environmental impacts and public health risks, through environmental contamination and the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Products produced from recycled materials conserve natural resources and use less energy than manufacturing using raw materials.

The strategy will provide opportunities for:

- decreasing environmental contamination and pollution;
- increasing monitoring of waste management facilities;
- increasing remediation of decommissioned waste facilities;
- expanding stewardship and recycling programs;
- improving internal government waste management practices;
- increasing recycling rates and conserving natural resources;
- increasing waste diversion trends across Saskatchewan; and
- ensuring safe and healthy Saskatchewan communities.

## Social

For the strategy to be successful and sustainable, all residents of Saskatchewan will need to take responsibility for waste and actively participate in responsible waste management opportunities. Success will rely on increasing social acceptability of responsible solid waste management by incorporating public participation and ensuring individuals understand their role in the waste management system.

The strategy will provide opportunities for:

- bringing stakeholders, First Nations and representatives together to discuss the needs of Saskatchewan communities and businesses;
- changing behaviors and increasing public awareness of inappropriate waste disposal methods and solid waste management best practices;
- building regional waste management systems through engagement, partnerships, and sharing; and
- enhancing accessibility of responsible waste management and recycling opportunities in northern and remote communities, and First Nation reserves.

## Economic

Solid waste management is widely recognized as one of the fastest growing segments of the environmental industries sector. The demand for innovative solutions to the challenges of waste management and resource recovery is growing rapidly. Economic opportunities associated with waste management include materials collection and transportation, processing and marketing recyclable materials, the design and operation of modernized waste management facilities, and the production of new products from reclaimed materials.

The strategy will provide opportunities for:

- encouraging innovation and partnerships to enhance efficiencies and develop new markets and products;
- creating economies of scale through regional waste management systems; and
- encouraging full-cost accounting practices for municipal landfills to ensure appropriate user fees are collected to cover the cost of landfill construction, operation and decommissioning according to government regulations and industry best practices.

# Measuring Success and Closing



The strategy will be a living document and will be reviewed continually to ensure the ministry is progressing towards the strategy's commitments and goals. Implementing the strategy will involve many partners outside the Government of Saskatchewan, including municipalities, First Nations, community not-for-profit groups, the waste management industry, and individual citizens. The Government of Saskatchewan will maintain accountability to assure provincial residents that it is actively pursuing the strategy's goals.

The information received during the engagement process will help to develop *Saskatchewan's Solid Waste Management Strategy* and the details of the resulting action plans. Once engagement has been completed, a detailed summary of the input received will be made available.

Following the development of the *Solid Waste Management Strategy* and action plans, the ministry will conduct public reviews of the strategy and create reports describing the ministry's progress towards the commitments outlined in the strategy. The ministry will also provide annual updates on the program performance, achievements, challenges and opportunities. Reporting on the performance of the strategy will keep the strategy relevant, and hold the ministry, as well as industry and individuals, accountable for its successes and challenges.

Your input will help the government better understand key interests and concerns to be considered during development of the strategy. Thank you for participating in the development of the *Solid Waste Management Strategy*. We look forward to reviewing your responses.

## Contact

Details of the workshop dates and a link to the online engagement survey can be found on the ministry's website at [saskatchewan.ca/environment](https://saskatchewan.ca/environment). Written submissions, requests, and questions can be forwarded to:

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Stewardship Branch  
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