



## Blue Box Transition

### Background

On June 3, 2021, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation & Parks (MECP) released the finalized Blue Box Regulation (O. Reg. 391/21) that transitions the current Blue Box program to full producer responsibility. The current Blue Box program, administered by Stewardship Ontario on behalf of stewards and operated by municipalities, will transition to the new framework between July 1, 2023, and December 31, 2025.

During transition, producers of products and/or packaging will be required to make best efforts to implement or continue operation of the Blue Box program as established in each municipality as defined by the regulation. Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs) will be responsible for negotiating agreements with municipalities and contractors for the transition of municipal Blue Box programs to full producer responsibility.

As of January 1, 2026, producers are required to implement a standardized Blue Box program (common collection system) across the province of Ontario in accordance with O. Reg. 391/21. Changes to the regulations were delayed and finally approved on April 30, 2022, which resulted in some short timelines for both producers and municipalities. In response, Circular Materials Ontario's (CMO) preferred model is to use existing infrastructure and collection services during transition through existing municipal contracts or extensions where possible. Post-transition, producer's responsibilities will change, but they will have had more time to prepare for a new and/or different common collection system for 2026 and beyond.

All Member Municipalities of Bruce Area Solid Waste Recycling are scheduled to transition on December 31, 2025 making our transition period 1 (one) day.



Under the Blue Box Regulation, a producer responsibility organization (PRO), or group of PROs that entered into an agreement with one another, that supply more than 66 per cent of Blue Box tonnage in Ontario, were required to submit a report (Initial Report) to the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority (RPRA) by July 1, 2022, outlining how they will operate the Blue Box system.

As the Blue Box collection system administrator, CMO is managing the procurement of curbside collection, depot collection, public space collection, promotion, and education, and receiving facilities. Individual PROs or producers would be responsible for processing and marketing collected Blue Box materials.

Given the extensive scope of work and limited timeline to implement a province-wide collection system, CMO presented a standard offer (“Interim Collection Offer”) to municipalities to provide residence and facility collection service during their transition period. As the BASWR Member Municipalities are set to transition at the end of the transition schedule, all seven municipalities will not be affected by transition.

The Collection RFPs are being released in stages with the first RFPs released in fall 2022. The RFP that captures the Grey and Bruce County (catchment #17) , is anticipated to be released Q4 2023. BASWR staff has been given approval from our Board of Management to look into submitting an RFP for blue box collection.

To continue using long-term municipal contracts into post-transition (January 1, 2026, and beyond) to provide Blue Box collection services, municipalities would be required to bid on CMO’s RFP as a contractor.

### **Data Submission Reports**

Municipalities must provide the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority (RPRA) with information regarding their individual established waste and recycling collection systems through an Initial Report and a Transition Report. The Initial Report and the Transition Report were submitted by BASWR staff to RPRA.

The information collected as part of the Initial Report and Transition Report will help producers and their delegated PROs understand existing municipal recycling programs that will need to be replicated as part of their responsibility under the Blue Box regulation during the transition period. It will also help PROs as they collaborate to determine how they will collectively service all eligible sources and public spaces in transitioned municipalities.

### **Municipalities as a Producer**

Under the Blue Box regulation, municipalities could meet the definition of a producer for the supply of Blue Box material to residents (e.g., paper-type correspondence and information such as water bills, handouts, and other notices). If this is the case, municipalities may also need to fulfill the requirements of a producer (i.e., registration, reporting, collection, management, and promotion and education).

The Blue Box regulation exempts producers that:

1. Generate less than \$2 million gross annual revenue from products and services in Ontario; and/or
2. Supply less than the minimum management requirements for a material category.

<b>Blue Box Material Category</b>	<b>Supply-based Exemption Level (kg)</b>
<b>Paper</b>	9,000
<b>Rigid plastic</b>	2,000
<b>Flexible plastic</b>	2,000
<b>Glass</b>	1,000
<b>Metal</b>	1,000
<b>Beverage containers</b>	1,000

If a producer (including municipalities) exceeds the revenue-based exemption, and their supply weight in at least one material category is above the tonnage exemption threshold, they are required to meet all producer obligations.

Based on a preliminary analysis of current exemption criteria, the member municipalities of BASWR do meet the revenue threshold but do not exceed the supply exemption level criteria. (in the case of “supply” each municipality must report materials which are produced and distributed for example an annual calendar)

## Collection of Blue Box Recyclables from Ineligible Sources

The Blue Box regulation lists a number of eligible sources from which producers must collect Blue Box recyclables including single-family homes, multi-residential buildings, not-for-profit long-term care and retirement homes, schools, and some public spaces (parks, playgrounds, transit stations and sidewalks).

Sources that are not eligible for collection by producers after transition, and that are currently serviced under the Town's recycling program include, but are not limited to, **municipal buildings, community centres and libraries, not-for-profit organizations, places of worship, daycares, and BIAs.**

## Post-transition Service Level Impacts

Beginning January 1, 2026, more types of materials will become accepted in the Blue Box program that are not currently accepted including flexible plastic, polystyrene foam, and single-use items. Accepted materials in the Blue Box program will be consistent across the province.

It is important to note that other changes are possible such as changes to when and how Blue Box material is collected. Details about what the Blue Box collection program will look like post-transition are unknown at this time.

## Conclusion

Staff will continue to monitor the development and implementation of the new Blue Box Program and identify learnings from those municipalities scheduled to transition in 2023.

\*this report was created by using a Newmarket: Blue Box Transition Update as a template