

Backgrounder: Proposed Transition for Residential Blue Bin Recycling in Manitoba

Extended Producer Responsibility

Manitoba has adopted an extended producer responsibility based model for recycling and safely disposing end-of-life products and materials. This model is based on the polluter pays principle and shifts the responsibility of waste management from government to industry. Under this model, the manufacturers, distributors and retailers of products, also known as industry stewards, must take responsibility for the recycling or safe disposal of the products they supply into Manitoba.

Current Residential Recycling Model

Manitoba has a shared responsibility model for residential packaging and printed paper recycling programs, which are commonly referred to as residential blue bin recycling programs. Under this model, communities (meaning municipalities and Indigenous communities) finance and manage blue bin recycling programs for their residents, and industry provides funding support to communities to cover a portion of the associated program cost. The funding provided by industry to support community blue bin recycling programs is one of the regulatory obligations under Manitoba's extended producer responsibility model.

Multi-Material Stewardship Manitoba (MMSM) is the industry-funded producer responsibility organization that operates a government-approved extended producer responsibility program for residential packaging and printed paper products. MMSM collects fees from its industry steward members, who are the manufacturers, distributors or retailers of packaging and printed paper products, and uses that revenue to reimburse communities for up to 80 percent of the cost of running their residential blue bin recycling programs. Communities are responsible for covering the remaining costs.

Proposed Residential Recycling Model

While industry is currently providing financial support for residential blue bin recycling programs, the remaining costs are still the responsibility of Manitoba's communities. To further reduce the financial and resource burden currently carried by Manitoba's communities for managing residential blue bin recycling programs, the Manitoba government has directed MMSM to develop a plan to transition to a fully industry-funded model for recycling residential blue bin materials.

MMSM is proposing a plan for a transition to a fully industry-operated recycling model where industry would assume the full operational and financial responsibility for collecting and recycling residential blue bin materials in Manitoba. This model, known as "full" extended producer responsibility, would transition the responsibility for delivering residential blue bin recycling services from communities to MMSM and the industry stewards they represent.

Full extended producer responsibility can help to standardize recycling services and the types of materials accepted in community blue bin recycling. A shift to full extended producer responsibility will also harmonize Manitoba's extended producer responsibility policies and programs with those in other provinces across Canada.

Approval of the Transition Plan

MMSM's transition plan outlines how MMSM anticipates working with communities to transition existing service provider contracts and responsibilities for residential blue bin recycling programs to MMSM while minimizing disruption of existing municipal contracts with third parties. The plan also outlines how MMSM proposes to maintain the integrity of existing residential blue bin recycling services by ensuring uninterrupted collection service to residents during the transition.

Manitoba Environment and Climate Change provides regulatory oversight of MMSM's program. The transition plan proposal is a new stewardship program plan that requires the approval of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change under the [Packaging and Printed Paper Stewardship Regulation, M.R. 195/2008](#). Comments received through this public consultation will help inform the department's review of MMSM's proposed plan.

Public consultation feedback on MMSM's earlier version of their transition plan in 2022 led to the creation of a minister-appointed advisory committee of representatives from the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, municipalities, Indigenous organizations, industry, environmental organizations and government agencies. Established in December 2023 and facilitated by Lefebvre Consulting Ltd. in spring 2024, the committee co-designed options to strengthen MMSM's plan to ensure a smooth transition to industry-operated residential recycling services. Manitoba Environment and Climate Change asked MMSM to revise their plan based on the facilitator's final report summarizing areas of consensus and recommendations for strengthening the transition. Based on the report recommendations, MMSM revised the transition plan in spring 2025. The department reviewed the revised plan with the advisory committee in summer 2025.