



Message from Brock Macdonald, RCBC CEO

It's been over two years since the BC Recycling Regulation shifted responsibility for curbside recycling. The triple P packaging and printed paper initiative was an epic gamechanger that reverberated through the entire recycling system. Many are still waiting for the dust to settle before looking to expand extended producer responsibility (EPR) further.



But like others in the sector, I'm wondering if it's time to review the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment (CCME) Canada-Wide Action Plan and discuss the next items for coverage. Paul Henderson, the general manager of Metro Vancouver solid waste services, has identified the need for mattress EPR. Albert Shamess, director of waste management at the City of Vancouver is also trying to address the mattress issue. Both public servants point to the thousands of mattresses abandoned each year on the streets and back alleys as the reason. More than 8000 mattresses were illegally dumped in Vancouver alone in each of the last three years, and that number is growing. The regional district estimates the costs of handling illegally dumped mattresses and other bulky items at \$5 million. Is this a problem that can be addressed by the Recycling Regulation?

We're already part way there. Metro Vancouver has a landfill ban in place and created a fee system that has led to the development of the recycling infrastructure required to handle the processing. Unfortunately, that backend charge may be driving some people to avoid the fee via illegal dumping. However, a transition to EPR would see those costs included in the sale of new mattresses, which could result in a more effective diversion to recycling facilities, particularly if the issue for those without means to transport old mattresses is addressed.

I also wonder if this may be the time to consider moving the accounting and fee remittance responsibility from retailers up the chain to wholesalers. Retailers have long expressed concerns over the ever-increasing complexity of collecting and submitting fees for a matrix of products and corresponding stewardship agencies. Retailers such as Canadian Tire and London Drugs sell a multitude of products covered by regulations across a number of jurisdictional boundaries. Some observers have opined that moving the fee to the distributor level would address a burden on retailers some feel is nearing fatigue.

While the responsibility for fee remittance may be worth further analysis and discussion at some point,

communities would benefit from mattress EPR now. It's time to have that conversation with the stakeholders concerned. Let us know at RCBC by sending your thoughts on this issue to brock@rcbc.ca.