

REPORT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2026

SUBJECT **Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities – Committee on Solid Waste and Circular Economy Update**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To provide an update on current and future advocacy activities that will be coordinated by the Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities' Committee on Solid Waste and Circular Economy (VICC-CSWCE).

BACKGROUND

As a member of the VICC-CSWCE, the Capital Regional District (CRD) collaborates with seven other regional districts to share information and data, discuss solutions for common challenges and present cohesive input and advocacy to other levels of government on matters related to responsible waste management.

While staff from the eight participating regional districts meet regularly, the VICC-CSWCE also includes elected officials that meet annually to share progress reports from each region and to discuss shared challenges, opportunities and areas where an expert unified voice could be leveraged to assist other levels of government and non-governmental organizations in developing effective waste management programs and policies.

2025 Progress Summary

Over the past year, the VICC-CSWCE drafted several successful Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) resolutions that were endorsed in September 2025, including:

- the development of a provincial disaster debris response plan
- the development of a provincial circular economy strategy
- actions to conserve BC's remaining landfill capacity
- sustainable funding support to help regional districts and landfill owners comply with landfill gas regulations
- a call to remove the requirement for regional districts to get Provincial approval on policies included in approved Solid Waste Management Plans

The VICC-CSWCE also issued a media release on the Province's unexpected decision to pivot from their previous commitment to create an extended producer responsibility (EPR) program for mattresses and their foundations, leading to a coordinated effort that saw the majority of committee members call for the Province to include mattresses in the next update of BC's *Recycling Regulation* via reports to their respective Boards, letters to the Minister of Environment and Parks and associated media activities.

Key Issues

Building on this effective advocacy work, the VICC-CSWCE identified the following priorities as key areas for collaboration throughout 2026:

- managing financial pressures to maintain service affordability
- addressing slow progress and gaps in the Province's *Recycling Regulation* and associated EPR programs
- expanding recycling opportunities and regulations in the industrial, commercial and institutional sector
- providing effective services for remote and rural communities
- increasing overall waste diversion rates across material streams
- reducing contamination in organics collection programs
- addressing the vulnerability of waste export systems and markets

Future Advocacy

The VICC-CSWCE approved these issues as priority areas for its advocacy efforts throughout 2026, directing the committee's executive to take action through direct conversation with the Minister of Environment and Parks and ministry staff, future UBCM resolutions, press releases and coordinated reporting and letter-writing from participating regional districts as appropriate.

Ongoing advocacy support from the CRD aligns with several strategies in the CRD's current Solid Waste Management Plan, including:

- Strategy 2E to "Advocate provincially and federally to limit or eliminate the manufacturing, distribution and/or sale of single use items and non-recyclable materials."
- Strategy 2F to "Advocate provincially and federally for sustainable product and packaging design."
- Strategy 3C to "Advocate for regulations that support avoiding food waste."
- Strategy 10A to "Advocate to the Province to expand EPR programs."
- Strategy 10C to "Advocate for increased return-to-retailer opportunities."

CONCLUSION

As a member of the Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities' Committee on Solid Waste and Circular Economy, the Capital Regional District (CRD) collaborates with seven other regional districts to share information, work together on common challenges and advocate to other levels of government on matters related to responsible waste management. In 2025, this committee took substantial action to advance several solutions for consideration by the Province. This advocacy work will continue in 2026 to address several issues of relevance to the CRD, including reducing contamination, expanding extended producer responsibility programs to non-residential sectors and providing effective services in rural and remote communities.

RECOMMENDATION

There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.

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