

Changing Markets for Canada's Recyclable Materials

Capital Regional District |

China has been the principal end-market for the majority of North American post-consumer plastics and other recyclable materials for many years.

However, in July 2017 China announced plans to severely restrict the importation of waste and recyclable materials from outside sources in an effort to curtail pollution and protect its environment. The Chinese submission to the World Trade Organization regarding its intentions may be seen at: <https://goo.gl/3pu6yv>.

With these changes coming fully into effect as of December 31, 2017, the “National Sword” quality control policy now being implemented in China has effectively closed China as a market for post-consumer plastics from outside sources, leaving many jurisdictions throughout North America without a market for an array of plastics collected for recycling.

As a result, the collection of large mixed plastic items (e.g., lawn furniture, hard plastic swimming pools) had to be discontinued at the Hartland recycling depot as of January 1, 2018 after the CRD's processing and marketing contractor discontinued accepting them due to the fact that China was their only market for this material.

There are currently no other recycling alternatives for these plastics and so the difficult decision had to be made to direct them to disposal as solid waste. However, the closure of Chinese recycling markets has created an opportunity for markets for these materials to be developed elsewhere—including in Canada—and it is hoped that the collection of these materials for recycling might be resumed if and when new markets emerge.

Please note that at this time we don't anticipate China's new policy will impact the collection of curbside recyclables in the region.

For more information on what's accepted at Hartland Landfill, please visit www.crd.bc.ca/hartland.
