

**REPORT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2020**

SUBJECT **Response to Environmental Resource Management 2019 Progress Report
Follow Up Questions**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To respond to questions regarding solid waste management and recycling raised by the Capital Regional District Board (CRD) at its meeting of May 27, 2020.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting of May 27, 2020, the CRD Board received the Environmental Resource Management (ERM) 2019 Progress Report for information. While discussing the report, a number of questions arose with respect to solid waste management and recycling in the region.

1. *What percentage of materials collected through Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) stewardship programs are recycled as compared to disposed?*

The percentage of materials collected through EPR programs that are recycled varies by product type, as some toxic materials cannot be recycled and need to be safely disposed while 100% of other product streams, such as beverage containers, are fully recycled. Where the products are recyclable the vast majority are recycled. Appendix A provides further details of how various EPR products are managed in British Columbia.

2. *What changes have been observed in the monthly quantities of garbage being disposed of at Hartland Landfill as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?*

Given that garbage generation and disposal is influenced by a number of parameters, the impact of the pandemic on the receipt of garbage at Hartland Landfill cannot be precisely determined. In broad terms, the quantities of solid waste received at Hartland for the months of April and May 2020 are down approximately 10% as compared to the same months in 2018 and 2019. Staff believe that this is largely attributable to the slowing of economic activity due to the pandemic.

3. *Has the pandemic impacted residential curbside blue box recycling?*

Based on curbside recycling program data for the months of March, April and May of 2020, as compared to the same months in 2019, it would appear that the pandemic has had an effect on the quantity of recyclable materials being placed out for collection. On average, the total monthly quantity of materials that were collected is up 12%. This includes a 37% increase in glass containers being collected. While glass is collected and tracked separately, all other recyclables are collected in two commingled collection streams (paper fibres and containers) so separate data on individual products types, such as packaging from online purchasing, is not available. While the reasons for these increases cannot be exactly determined, it is reasonable to assume that with restaurants having been largely

closed during the pandemic, residents have been having more meals at home and packaging associated with preparing those meals has been recycled at the curb. An increase in online purchasing may also have contributed to an increase in packaging materials being recycled through the blue box program. There may also have been an increase in residents undertaking clean-ups of their residences while they are isolating at home resulting in more materials, such as accumulations of old magazines, being placed out for recycling.

CONCLUSION

At its meeting of May 27, 2020, the CRD Board posed questions with respect to solid waste management and recycling in the region, including a question about recycling rates associated with EPR programs and what impacts the COVID-19 pandemic may be having on solid waste and recycling operations. In EPR programs where the materials are recyclable and not toxic, the vast majority are recycled. The COVID-19 pandemic has apparently impacted solid waste and recycling operations with a 10% decline in quantities of waste being landfilled and an increase in recyclable materials being collected through the residential curbside recycling program.

RECOMMENDATION

The Environmental Services Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

That this report be received for information.

Submitted by:	Russ Smith, Senior Manager, Environmental Resource Management
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P. Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

Appendix A: Details on Extended Producer Responsibility Product Management in British Columbia