

Where it all started

Nova Scotia's *Solid Waste Resource Management (SWRM) Strategy* (1995) grew out of public concern about issues such as leachate and air pollution from landfills and waste incinerators. The Nova Scotia government responded to these concerns by including in its new *Environment Act* (1995) the establishment of a *SWRM Strategy* and the adoption of the Canadian target of 50 per cent solid waste diversion goal for the year 2000.

In 1994, the government had embarked on an extensive public consultation to learn how the people of Nova Scotia wanted to tackle the waste challenges facing the province. The following priorities were established as a result of that consultation process and outlined in the *SWRM Strategy*:

- Recognition of solid waste as a resource
- Equitable and consistent enforcement of regulations
- Greater emphasis on public education and awareness
- Shared responsibility and stewardship
- Regional cooperation to achieve diversion targets and objectives for environmental protection, taking into account municipal concerns

Goals included in the *Environment Act*, 1995

- Maintain environmental protection as essential to the integrity of eco-systems, human health, and the socio-economic well-being of society
- Maintain the principles of sustainable development
- Confirm the polluter-pays principle: anyone who creates an adverse effect on the environment must take remedial action and pay for the costs of that action
- Encourage the development and use of environmental technologies, innovations, and industries

What have we achieved so far?

Our *SWRM Strategy* made ambitious commitments to solid waste resource management, and the people of Nova Scotia responded with action. Households embraced the separation of recyclable and compostable resources into various receptacles for collection and processing. What was "waste" became a resource through the cooperative efforts of municipalities, the Resource Recovery Fund Board (RRFB), and industry stewards. We have met many of our original commitments from the *Strategy*, including our 50 per cent diversion goal by 2000. *The Final Report on Nova Scotia's 1995 Solid Waste Resource*

What has changed since the SWRM Strategy was released?

Nova Scotia has made substantial progress in solid waste resource management since the release of the *SWRM Strategy* in 1995. However, the percentage of materials diverted has reached a plateau with significant quantities of valuable resources such as food and yard waste still ending up in landfills. This represents lost opportunities for resource recovery and has broader environmental and economical impacts.

As waste resource materials change, our approach to waste resource management needs to adapt. *Our Path Forward* maps out how Nova Scotia will meet the waste disposal target of no more than 300 kilograms per person per year while integrating the long-term objective of the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act (EGSPA)* to fully integrate environmental sustainability and economic prosperity.

Principles of the *EGSPA* 2007

- The health of the economy, the health of the environment, and the health of the people of the province are interconnected.
- Environmentally sustainable economic development that recognizes the economic value of the province's environmental assets is essential to the long-term prosperity of the province.
- The environment and the economy of the province are a shared responsibility of all levels of government, the private sector, and the people of the province.
- The environment and economy must be managed for the benefit of present and future generations.
- Innovative solutions are necessary to mutually reinforce the environment and the economy.
- A long-term approach to planning and decision making is necessary to harmonize the province's goals of economic prosperity and environmental sustainability.
- The management of goals for sustainable prosperity—such as emission reduction, energy efficiency programs, and increasing the amount of legally protected land—will preserve and improve the province's environment and economy for future generations.

Goal 1:**Increase participation in waste prevention and diversion**

Nova Scotia has one of the highest waste diversion rates in Canada. We have realized many benefits by preventing materials from ending up in landfills. Potential environmental effects of landfill sites have been avoided, and waste is now identified as a valuable resource. Although we should celebrate our success to date, there are many opportunities to do more.

What will the government of Nova Scotia do?

We will develop new incentives to encourage participation in waste prevention and diversion.

Waste prevention and diversion clearly demonstrate the principles of *EGSPA*. When the environmental, economic, and societal costs of an action are accounted for, people are more likely to make decisions that benefit both the environment and the economy. But it is still too easy to be wasteful. We must look at what incentives are necessary for Nova Scotians to benefit from increased waste prevention and diversion.

Goal 3: Increase waste diversion

Waste Diversion, as defined in the *Solid Waste Management (SWM) Regulations*, means waste reduction, reuse, recycling, or composting.

The benefits of waste diversion are both economic and environmental. Since the implementation of the *SWRM Strategy*, Nova Scotia has seen an increase in the number of jobs related to recycling and composting. By recycling and composting materials in Nova Scotia, resources are recirculated through the economy, resulting in jobs and income for Nova Scotians.

Waste diversion through recycling and composting generate local and global environmental benefits. For example, by composting food and yard waste, Nova Scotians are gaining the nutrient value of compost while preventing the production of methane gas in landfills, which in turn reduces greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Nova Scotians recognize the value of diverting materials from disposal and using them to produce other useful products. We need to continue to find new ways to turn waste into valuable products and materials, and we need to find markets for those products and materials. Nova Scotia's innovative services, technologies, and industries turn waste resources into valuable products, clean up our environment, strengthen our economy, and create jobs.

What will the government of Nova Scotia do?

We will review existing regulations to help us meet Nova Scotia's current and future opportunities and challenges for waste diversion.

Implemented in 1995, our *SWM Regulations* have contributed to increased recycling and composting rates, especially from households. However, the "waste management landscape" has changed significantly in the past 15 years. The success of current waste diversion initiatives has proven that the right mix of regulations, public awareness, and motivation can create impressive results.

We must review the *SWM Regulations* to ensure they can meet the challenges and opportunities of today and into the future.

Goal 5: Increase producer responsibility for end-of-life management of products and materials

Consumers today have a greater understanding of the connections between the products they use and their environmental impacts. Many consumers demand that the products they buy have less of an environmental impact. These products range from plastic packaging to products such as propane tanks and computers.

The recycling programs we have today were developed as a way to reduce the environmental impacts of the products and materials we use. Initially the environmental concerns were related to disposal. Since waste management is usually paid for by taxpayers, it has become typical for recycling costs to be paid by taxpayers, sometimes with help from producers. This has become the accepted model, but many people are now questioning producers' responsibility for the products they create, from resource extraction to disposal, recycling, or reuse.

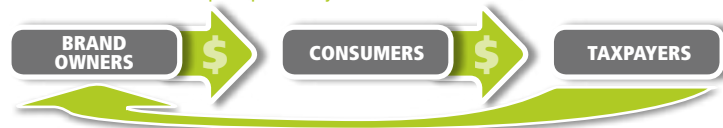
Product stewardship developed in response to people questioning who should be responsible for products and materials when they are no longer useful. Product stewardship policies range from the shared responsibility between the taxpayer and the producer for the product's end-of-life recycling or disposal to full manufacturer responsibility, called Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).

Responsibility for Waste

In today's typical waste management system tax payers bear the full responsibility for waste management



With Product Stewardship, responsibility is shared between brand owners, consumers and taxpayers



Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a form of product stewardship which makes brand owners and consumers financially responsible for waste management, rather than tax payers



EGSPA states that product stewardship will be used to ensure that the province meets the EGSPA disposal target: "the solid-waste disposal rate will be no greater than 300 kilograms per person per year by the year 2015 through measures that include the development of new programs and product stewardship regulations."

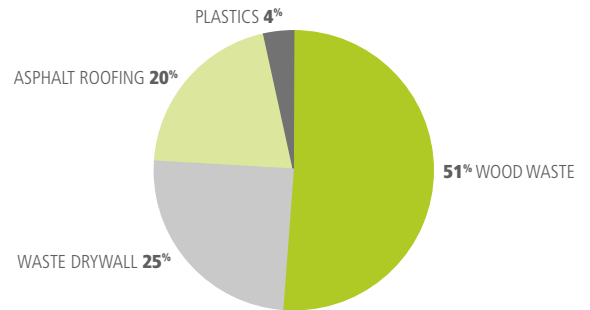
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Goal 6: Increase diversion of construction and demolition waste

Construction and demolition (C&D) waste includes materials normally used in the construction of buildings, structures, roadways, and landscaping features. C&D waste accounts for 25 to 30 per cent of Nova Scotia’s total waste. While much C&D waste is currently diverted from disposal, there is significant potential to increase recycling of these materials into value-added products.

C&D waste, excluding concrete and mixed rubble, consists of:

- 51% wood waste**
- 25% waste drywall**
- 20% asphalt roofing**
- 4% plastics**



What will the government of Nova Scotia do?

We will collaborate with C&D waste generators and receivers to develop guidelines around best management practices.

We will develop an education and communication plan on best management practices for C&D waste.

We will ensure that our regulatory environment supports C&D waste prevention and diversion.

The disposal of C&D waste provides additional opportunities. With the right mix of incentives and educational information, contractors and property owners may be more likely to properly sort and recycle C&D waste rather than send it for disposal.

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Our Path Forward Action Plan

WHAT STAKEHOLDERS WANT	WHAT NS GOVERNMENT WILL DO	HOW WE'LL DO IT
Increased participation in waste prevention and diversion	Develop new incentives to encourage participation in waste prevention and diversion	Review policy options for packaging and disposable products reduction Develop options for other incentives
Improved compliance and education programs	Work with our partners to review compliance and education related to solid waste resource management	Establish an advisory committee to set objectives and identify compliance and education opportunities
Increased waste diversion	Review existing regulations to help us meet Nova Scotia's current and future opportunities and challenges for waste diversion	Develop project plan and identify focus areas Initiate regulation review
Increased cost effectiveness of diversion programs	Require renewal of Regional Plans Evaluate partnerships	Develop workplan to recommend amending regulations Review roles of existing partners such as RRFB, municipalities, and industry
Increase producer responsibility for end-of-life management of products and materials	Ensure regulatory environment supports product stewardship, including extended producer responsibility (EPR) Develop an <i>Extended Producer Responsibility Action Plan</i>	Review existing stewardship/EPR programs Identify which products and materials should be managed by product stewardship / EPR policies Identify an implementation plan for product categories listed in Phase 1 of the <i>Canada-wide Action Plan</i> on EPR, with plan to designate packaging first Develop policy framework for product stewardship, including EPR
Increase diversion of construction & demolition (C&D) waste	Collaborate with C&D waste generators and receivers to develop guidelines around best management practices Develop education and communication plan on best management practices for C&D waste Ensure regulatory environment supports C&D waste prevention and diversion	Approach stakeholders to form a working group to develop guidelines for best management practices for maximum diversions at minimum costs Develop C&D policy tools Scope out need for C&D regulations

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