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Recycling is a key component of a comprehensive solid waste management strategy in Saskatchewan, diverting tonnes of waste from landfills. More than ever, the Saskatchewan public expects responsible environmental management from individual consumers, industry stakeholders and the various orders of government. Despite this, it is individual municipalities and the taxpayers they serve that assume the full costs and risks of recycling.

SUMA supports the establishment of a province-wide Multi-Material Recycling Program (MMRP) that would see greater consideration given to the full life cycle costs of materials, and shared responsibility amongst those that use these materials. In particular, the MMRP must:

- Require commercial/industrial producers of waste to take on significant financial and physical recycling responsibilities;
- Engage key commercial and industrial sectors;
- Be initiated by the end of 2010, as committed to by the Minister of Environment;
- Support smaller municipalities to start up and operate local recycling programs; and
- Closely engage the municipal sector in the design phase.

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In 2005, Saskatchewan Environment formed an Advisory Committee to determine the principles and strategy for a MMRP. The Committee released its final report in 2007, which advocates the shifting the responsibility for funding recycling away from the taxpayer and towards an approach that hinges on the idea that those who produce, use and derive benefit from products, take responsibility for the full life-cycle costs of those materials. Industry participation would be mandatory with an independent organization collecting industry fees for dispersal to municipalities. The Provincial Government would assume a regulatory role, reviewing the program and providing guidance when necessary.

From the perspective of urban municipalities, the need for an MMRP is dire. The sharp drop in market prices for recyclable materials, such as paper, plastic, glass and tin, has placed municipal recycling operations at great risk of scaling back or shutting down completely. Without revenue from industry or product consumers, the financial burden of recycling falls to municipalities, diverting limited resources away from other important municipal services.

In early 2009, the Provincial Government introduced a bridge funding program for struggling municipal recyclers in recognition that municipalities cannot sustain recycling operation on their own. The intent of this bridge funding is to provide a short-term solution to keep existing public recycling programs in operation until the introduction of a province-wide MMRP. This bridge funding program is scheduled to end March 2010.

SUMA has participated on the MMRP Advisory Committee to communicate the urban municipal perspective. SUMA's minimum requirements for an MMRP include:

- **Extended Producer Responsibility.** Currently, property taxpayers cover the full cost of municipal recycling programs. The proposed MMRP must follow a process where producers accept responsibility for the management of recyclable waste. SUMA supports that industry should bear 100 per cent of recycling costs under the new MMRP.
- **A phased inclusion of the newsprint industry.** SUMA can accept a MMRP that does not initially include the newsprint industry and it understands that the newsprint industry may see participation in the MMRP cost prohibitive. SUMA proposed a phased inclusion of the newsprint industry based on an agreed period of time. During this phase in period, the Provincial Government should create a bridge funding program to assist recycling of printed material. The funding will cease to exist once the newsprint industry is fully included in the MMRP.
- **Technical and financial support for small municipalities** to begin offering basic recycling services.

SUMA urges all parties to work together to ensure the implementation of a permanent, province-wide MMRP by the end of 2010. Further delays will lead to severe threat to municipal recyclers and the risk of municipalities abandoning their recycling operations altogether.

Continued consultations with municipalities and other stakeholders are essential to establish the goals and guidelines for any future additions or revisions to the MMRP. Only by consulting with municipal recyclers and adapting the program to their needs will the MMRP be a successful, long-term solution to recycling in Saskatchewan.

**Strategy:**

1. Continue to advocate the urgency of a MMRP with the Province.
2. Support development of the MMRP by channeling information gathered by SUMA regarding municipal recycling operations.
3. Ensure the interests of members are accurately represented in any MMRP consultation process.