

Producers should pay to dispose of packaging

Province ought to follow advice

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In keeping with making our world greener, the Region is looking to make businesses pay the full cost to dispose of the packaging they produce.

Durham's works committee recently endorsed a discussion paper from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario asking the Province to bring forth legislation that would make industry pay for disposal of packaging.

Such provincial law would save the Region \$4 million per year in disposal costs and, together with the \$9.3 million the region expects to receive in blue box revenues and subsidies this year, would be a substantial gain for the taxpayer.

What to do with our waste has been a burning issue for years now, with incineration the lead option on the table. Since much of what is thrown out is excess packaging that can't be recycled, it only stands to reason business should pay its fair share.

Environmental watchdogs have been pushing for years to have businesses reduce the amount of non-recyclable packaging they use in their products. But such pressures usually result in action only when there is a price to pay for inaction.

If companies know they'll have to cover a hefty fee to get rid of the packaging they produce, they'll strive to reduce it over time -- a win-win situation for everyone.

With the Region pushing for an ambitious 70 per cent waste diversion goal by 2010, meaning just 30 per cent of all waste would go to landfill or incineration, every dollar that can offset costs means less money coming out of taxpayers' collective pockets.

Such provincial legislation would follow similar moves by the Province to increase recyclables -- think of the push by the LCBO for bottle returns and the decision to eliminate plastic bags in grocery stores several years from now.

It's all part of a vast array of moves to make Ontario a cleaner, greener place to live. Having companies pay to dispose of packaging should ultimately result in less packaging, less waste and a cleaner province.