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Simcoe County Zero Waste Coalition formed

Citizens from across Simcoe County, Ontario have gathered to form the Simcoe County Zero Waste Coalition. Simcoe County is a jurisdiction about one hour north of Toronto, Ontario and encompasses Collingwood and other fast-growing towns. The area has been the home of heated debate over the last ten years on waste management issues, most recently with Site 41 -- a controversial proposed municipal landfill.

Many of those joining the coalition want to take the next step and begin a more positive process in resolving the county's significant waste challenges, moving from a focus on disposal to waste reduction and extended producer responsibility (EPR).

The coalition's long-term goal is to make Simcoe County a "Zero Waste" community. Based on concepts already common in Europe and in other parts of Canada, Zero Waste means that each of us has a role to play in reducing the amount of waste we produce or consume. Becoming a Zero Waste community will require the support of individuals, retailers, producers, and government to rethink and change their waste disposal habits.

The coalition will also work with the county and the province to address the existing "shared cost" system that sees much of the waste disposal cost borne by taxpayers.

Most importantly, coalition members believe in action. Many ideas for citizen-based initiatives have been reviewed and a number selected for implementation. Two possible programs are:

1. A county-wide education program to inform all citizens, business and government on the Zero Waste initiative.
2. Promoting the use of reusable bags for shopping and curtailing the use of disposable plastic bags.

The coalition has already formed two working groups and expects to active across the county this fall.

For more information, please contact Gordon McKay at 705-526-7129, gordonmckay@rogers.com

<http://www.solidwastemag.com/issues/ISArticle.asp?id=86387&issue=07012008>