

BCUOMA Draft Program Expansion Plan Feedback

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft plan. Zero Waste BC is a non-profit association dedicated to driving systemic change towards Zero Waste in BC. Zero Waste is the conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse, and recovery of products, packaging, and materials without burning and with no discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment or human health. Our current resource consumption systems of linear take-make-waste not only create waste but also generate a huge amount of greenhouse gases which constitute some of the discharges that threaten the environment and human health. EPR programs can play a key role in changing these consumption systems. For more information on Zero Waste, please see the Zero Waste Hierarchy.¹

We are pleased that BC is intending to regulate these additional forms of packaging (diesel exhaust fluid, automotive additives, windshield washer liquid, aerosols, drums and others) and we submit these comments in hope that the program will show leadership in the realm of EPR to move it beyond mere recycling to actually changing the nature of the products and how the service is delivered, as envisioned in the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment Canada-wide Action Plan for EPR.

Please see our comments by section below:

[Section 1. Overview and 2. Legal Requirements](#)

As noted, this expansion to include all automotive containers is good news. The previous plan noted responsibility for antifreeze but that has been deleted from the plan although this is regulated as well as residuals in the other containers. It is not stated that the program will handle any residuals other than oil in the containers but it should take responsibility for them (and indeed already did for antifreeze) and make this clear throughout the plan.

[Section 3. Governance and Financing](#)

Details are provided for oil and antifreeze but there are no details in how these other products are sold and to what degree the limitation of 210 L size will exclude some product lines.

BCUOMA is commended for a member at large and a municipal representative on its Board.

¹ Zero Waste Hierarchy: <https://zerowastecanada.ca/zero-waste-hierarchy/>.

In addition to this, the Board would ideally represent a wider range of stakeholders including reuse and repair organizations, recyclers, other local governments, First Nations and environmental NGOs.

In regards to financing, BCUOMA should further develop variable environmental handling fees based on certain criteria such as lifespan, use of refillables and reusable containers, use of easy to recycle materials (versus materials that are wasted by being burned for energy), etc. to drive product design change as intended by the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment. The program could incentivize reusable containers and then those that are actually recyclable. (Note the link to BCUOMA's varying fee approach in the original plan is not working). The programs should try to phase out the ironically named eco-boxes as well as PVC pouches and try to prevent biodegradable forms of packaging from being used with prohibitive fees. As the Desrosiers report notes, developing standardized containers with a focus on reuse is feasible. It should be a key aspect of this renewed program. UOMA is commended for conducting a study into how the circular economy could be relevant to these products.

The fees should also be set at a higher level to pay for the improvements needed in understanding collection rates, providing more comprehensive collection networks, enhancing awareness and fulfilling the mandate for redesign and reuse.

Section 4. Program Products

Lubricating Oil -the study on consumption on use is helpful and should be used to identify ways the program could minimize loss (such as leak detection and prevention). The program should also look at ways to minimize the other uses where the oil may be burned without proper environmental and health protections.

Oil Filters -The program should work to minimize the non-recyclable components of oil filters.

Section 5. Collection

BCUOMA has been doing well in improving its public collection sites and increasing the compensation. It is also appreciated that BCUOMA is looking beyond the SABC standard. The target for coverage should be that 100% of the population has access to either a collection depot or a pick-up system to return the product and packaging (free of charge to the end user). The SABC standard was not developed in consultation with local governments nor the public, nor does it meet the intent of the Recycling Regulation and so should not be used as a measure of accessibility. Programs should provide service in all municipalities and if no service provider can be contracted, the program itself should set up the collection depot. The program should work with the BC Product Stewardship Council and the Indigenous Zero Waste Technical Advisory Group to determine the underserved communities. (Note the link to the MNP report from 2018 is not live).

The program may also wish to do user surveys to understand where and why materials may be uncollected. The 2018 BC survey noted that 39% of residents found recycling used lubricating oil, filters and containers very convenient and another 37% found it somewhat convenient.² A target to raise this number as well as an annual survey to measure it would be useful. The survey also noted that up to 10% of respondents may throw program products in the garbage. When asked why these items may have been thrown in the garbage, 23% did not know the item was recyclable, 38% did not know where to take it and 17% said there was nowhere to take it or no way to get it there. This shows some key areas that this program plan should address.

Section 6 Transportation and Processing

The program is commended for having different collection zones but it looks like there are now 9 and not 11. The plan notes this is part of an incentive system but the plan makes no mention of how the incentives work, how they are different, if they cover all of the costs of collectors and if they are effective.

6.3 This section has a table labelled targets but the table seems to reflect existing collection levels. While the regulation does state 75% collection as a baseline it also notes the ability of the director to set higher targets which they should for mature programs. The ultimate target for filters and containers should be 100%. Given that oil, antifreeze and other products in containers may be consumed, other methods such as audits and surveys should be used to understand what products may be going uncollected.

6.4 Product Management. Ideally the Zero Waste Hierarchy is used to develop systems for the products to be redesigned, reduced, reused and recycled. As noted above, containers are preferable. It is good that antifreeze and lubricating oil can be recycled back into its original purpose but should there also be a system to reuse any residuals that are in their original state without refining being necessary. The programs should look to understand why some oil cannot be recycled back into lubricating oil and work to address those challenges with a goal to stop burning it. Similarly, can more filters be shifted to recyclable types and containers, when not reusable, be recyclable. There is no mention of how the residuals in the extended suite of program products will be handled nor if any of their containers will be handled any differently than the existing ones. (The link to the LCA study is broken).

6.5 Landfill Audits

The use of waste composition audits going forward is useful to see if the containers and filters are being captured by the program, and the program should partner with other programs to conduct composition studies annually across BC. The results should be published on the BCUOMA website, and the details of the studies should be included in the annual report to the

² BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (2018). Consumer Awareness Survey of Extended Producer Responsibility Programs in BC. Accessed at https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/waste-management/recycling/rel-res/consumer_awareness_survey_of_epr_2017.pdf.

BC Government and made public. This data should be used to understand the degree of success of collection given the challenges and estimates of what is available to collect noted in the plan.

Section 7 Paying the Cost of Collection and Management

This is a unique approach that is suitable as long as the accessibility, collection rates and retention of collectors is high. Care also needs to be taken that the end fates of the materials are in line with the program plan and it is not clear if this is part of the agreement as if the collector owns the product, it is assumed they sell it to the market. It is also not clear how this may need to change for items of lower value such as the additional forms of packaging or how incentives are changed in the event that the market rates for collected items are no longer sufficient to justify the collectors continuing as collectors.

The plan also notes challenges with local governments collecting other HHW but not BCUOMA products. The program should work with local governments to understand what the rationale is for not collecting BCUOMA materials and work to address them. This may be more important as the program expands its product suite.

The program may need to look more closely at its existing system to see if any changes are needed with the new suite of materials to collect regarding collection systems, processing, incentives and costs.

Section 8 Program Marketing and Consumer Awareness

For a program operating as long as BCUOMA has, it is surprising that the level of consumer awareness is not higher. The 2018 BC report noted above found only 60% of residents were aware that used lubricating oil, filters and containers could be recycled with only up to 46% recycling or returning them. That the BCUOMA study in 2016 found that 78% of British Columbians were aware of the program is interesting and shows the need for more regular and impartial surveys.

If only 78% of the BC residents (2016 study) were aware of the program, it can be assumed that the collection rate is lower than that for consumers. The goal should be to get 95% of the population aware of the program by 2024 (and later 100%) with work done to increase awareness of the new range of products. To do otherwise is to continue to externalize costs to the public and the environment. The program could also pursue disposal bans with local governments as a way to ensure consumers do the right thing but also that they are aware that throwing these products away is not appropriate.

In conclusion

The program plan has a good basis but needs stronger targets, more ambition in achieving the outcomes intended by the CCME Canada-wide Action Plan for EPR and a bit more editing to

show how these new product categories will be handled by the program. Some of the more ambitious direction could include more fully addressing some of the suggestions from the consultation for the previous plan. Another area that could be examined is the issue of the products entering the marine environment and oil containers used for boats ending up as shoreline litter. That said, we look forward to the roll out of these new services.

Sincerely,
Sue Maxwell
On behalf of Zero Waste BC