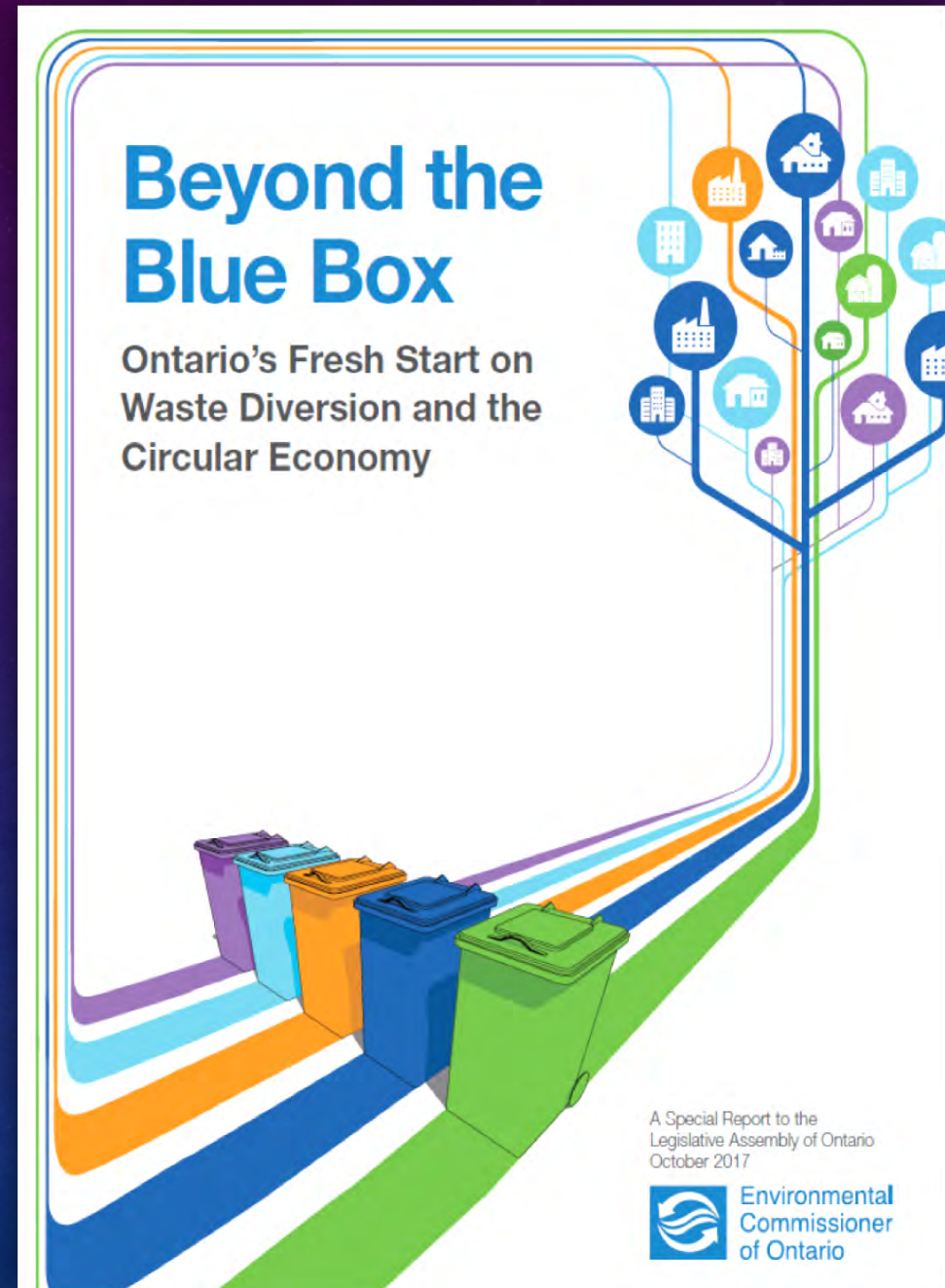


BEYOND THE BLUE BOX

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Recycling Council of
Alberta

Oct. 3, 2019



OVERVIEW

1. Ontario's waste problem
2. The Waste Free Ontario Act
3. Circular Economy?



We throw out too much. Most of it goes to landfill.

1: Ontario has a Waste Problem



ONTARIO PRODUCES A LOT OF WASTE

- Ontario produces ~12 million tonnes of waste / year
 - ~1 tonne/person/year
- We throw out $\frac{3}{4}$ of it
 - ~6 million tonnes to landfill
 - ~2.7 million tonnes exported
 - ~300,000 tonnes incinerated



CONTRIBUTES TO
CLIMATE CHANGE

CARBON
DIOXIDE
CO₂

METHANE
CH₄

LANDFILL SITE

CONTAINS DECAYING ORGANIC WASTE

LEACHATE

Metals, Chloride, Nutrients, Chemicals

GROUND WATER



eco.on.ca

CONSEQUENCES

- Soil and groundwater pollution
- Methane from organics a powerful climate pollutant
- Uses up precious disposal capacity
- Squanders valuable resources

FROM BLUE BOX TO WASTE DIVERSION ACT

We've been trying to divert waste from landfill for 40 years.

- Blue Box began as voluntary program, 1970s
 - Mandatory for most in 1994
- *Waste Diversion Act, 2002 (WDA)* added:
 - Household hazardous waste
 - Tires
 - Electronics



Blue Box
852,000
tonnes
diverted
(residential
only)



Hazardous
20,000
tonnes
collected

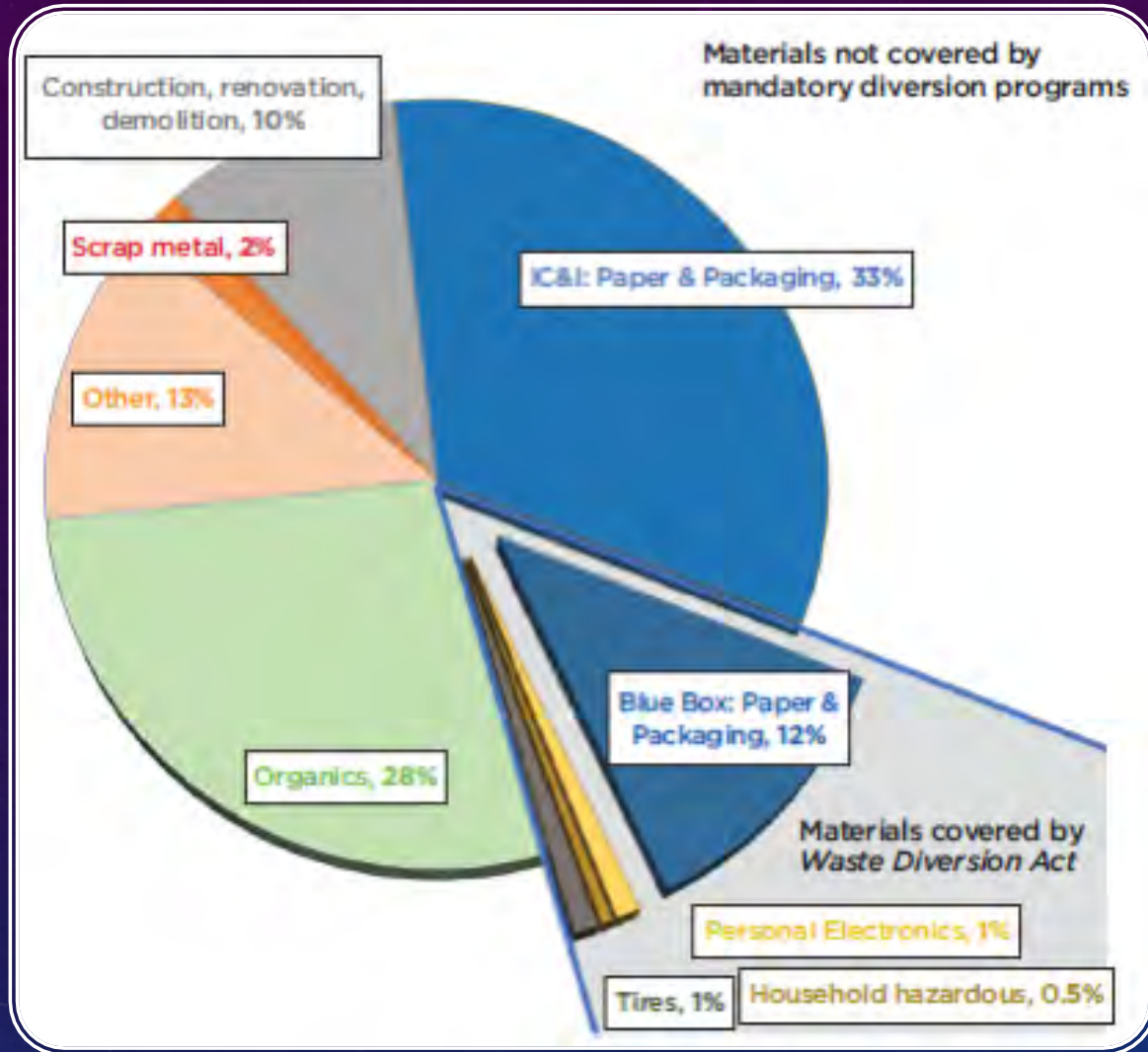


Used Tires
128,000
tonnes
diverted



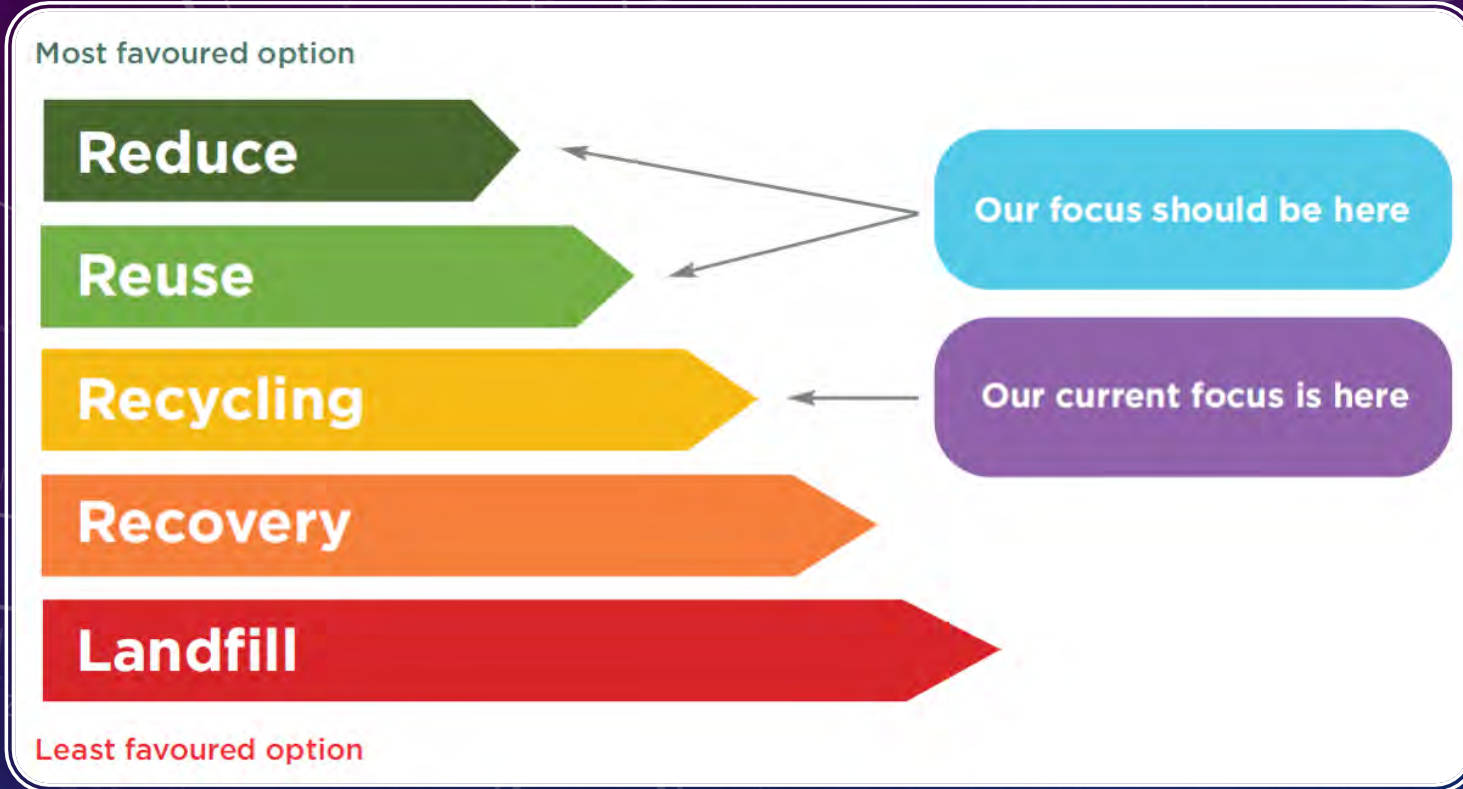
Electronics
68,000
tonnes
collected

PROBLEMS WITH THE WDA



The old law didn't work. Waste diversion stagnated at 25% and taxpayers still pay too much.

END OF PIPE DOESN'T WORK



A new waste law
and strategy –
what will they
change?

2: Waste-Free Ontario Act



TWO NEW LAWS

- Waste Diversion Transition Act
- Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act

WHAT'S NEW?

In the Law:

- Direct producer responsibility
- Enhanced transparency and accountability
 - Data collection
 - Service provider responsibilities
- Enforcement
- Circular Economy

In the Strategy:

- Improving IC&I diversion
- Regulatory review
- Designating new materials
- Organics action plan
- Excess soil management policy
- Procurement

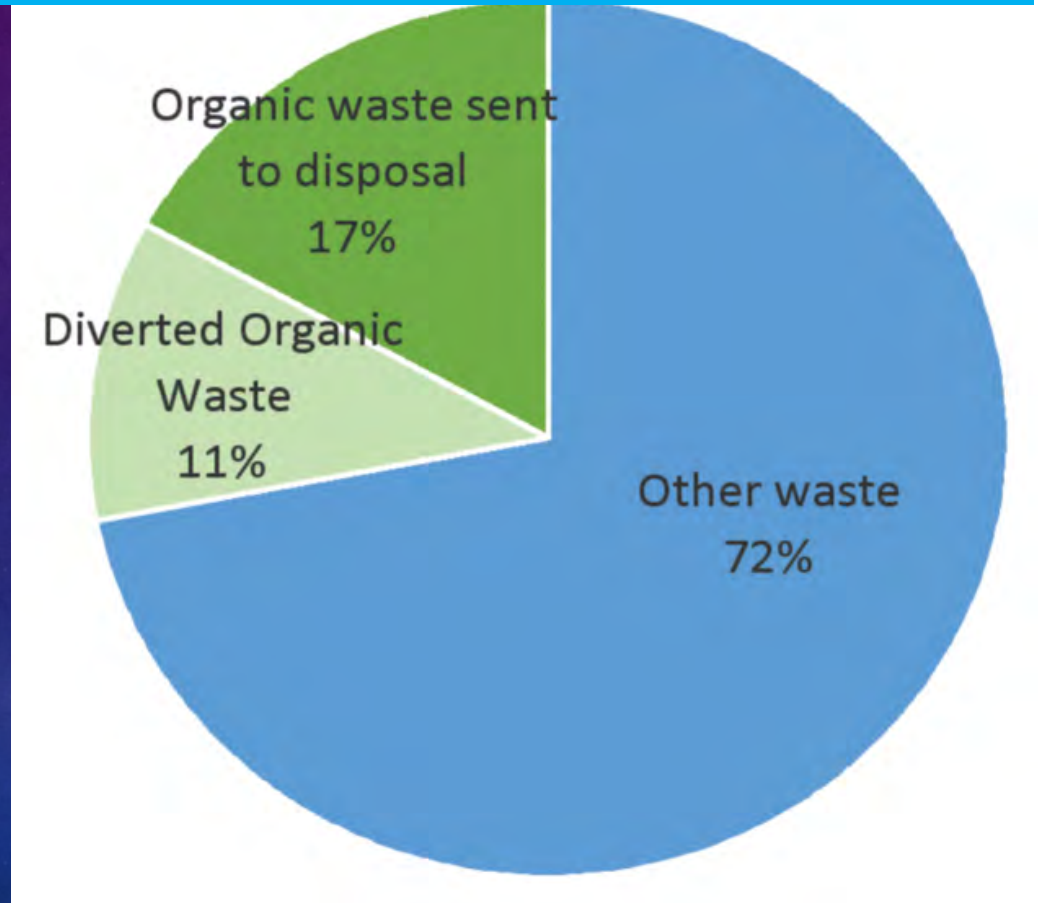
WILL IT WORK?

- Key issues:
 - A. Banning organics
 - B. Strong recycling standards
 - C. ICI



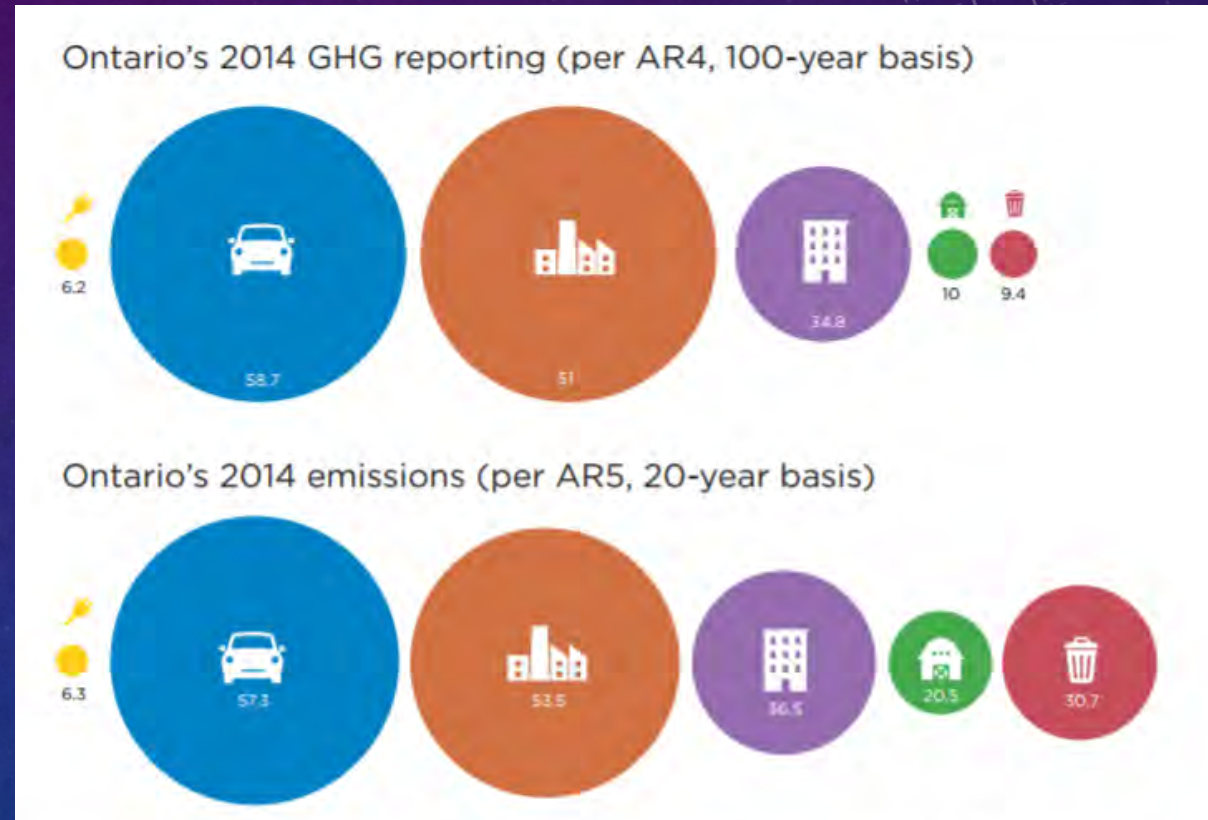
A. ORGANIC WASTE

- 28% of waste is organics
- Poor diversion
- Major source of methane (climate damage)



METHANE IS UNDERESTIMATED

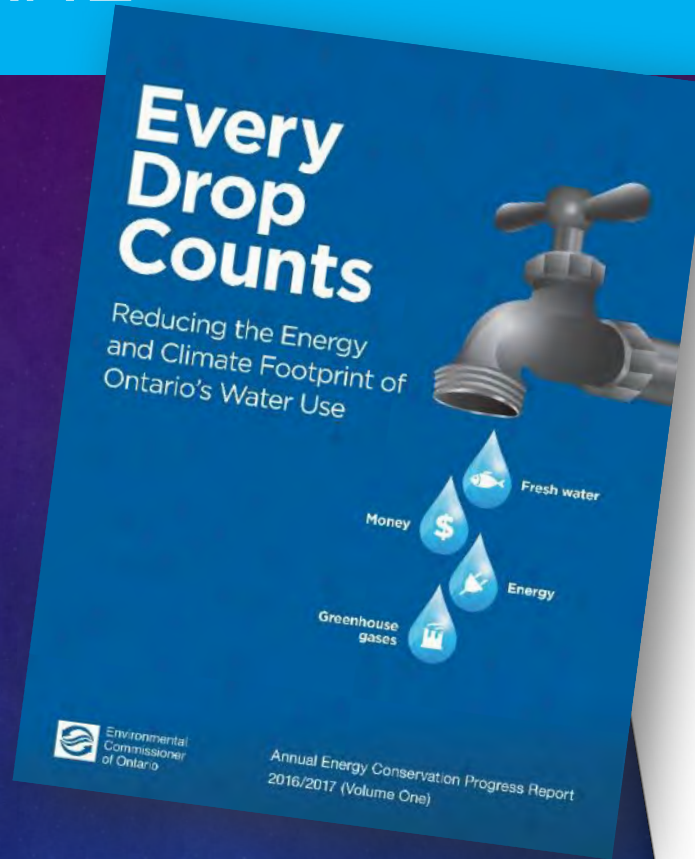
- Roughly 100 times worse climate pollution than CO₂



Source: Figure created by the ECO using information from Environment and Climate Change Canada, National Inventory Report 1990-2014: Greenhouse Gas Sources and Sinks in Canada, Part 3, 2016; and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis, Chapter 8: Anthropogenic and Natural Radiative Forcing (contribution of Working Group 1 to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), 2013.

MORE ABOUT METHANE

- Health hazard at high concentrations
 - Ground level ozone
- Wasted fuel source
- Waste of nutrients



CHALLENGES?

- Can't ban organics until you have somewhere to send them
 - Need an efficient, reliable approvals process
- Siting concerns (esp. odour)
- Cost



ECO RECOMMENDED

- Ban landfill of food waste
- Fast, predictable approvals for anaerobic digestion and composting facilities, while **protecting public health and environment**



LEARNING FROM

- Household bans:
 - Nova Scotia
 - PEI
 - Metro Vancouver
- Commercial bans:
 - California
 - Connecticut
 - Massachusetts
 - Rhode Island
 - Vermont



B. RECYCLING STANDARDS

- Strict standards are critical to ensure high-quality materials and good environmental results
- Create a level playing field



CHALLENGES?

- Clarity and enforceability
- Expense to business
- Allowing for innovation



Photo Credit: Shaun Fisher CC BY 2.0

ECO RECOMMENDED

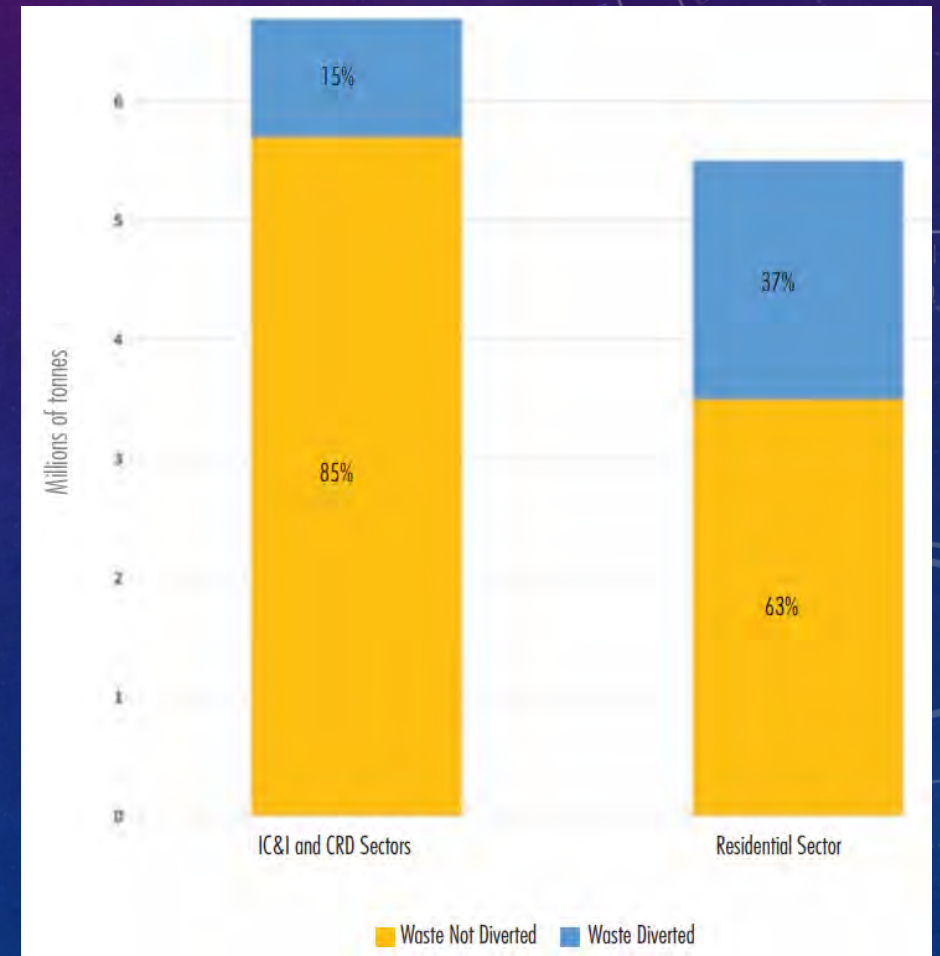
Recycling standards that are clear, enforceable, high level of environmental protection



C. ICI

IC&I sectors don't pull their weight

- Big waste generators
- Low diversion rate: ~15%
 - Residential waste diversion: 37% or higher



EXEMPT FROM BLUE BOX



IC&I Paper & Packaging
~34% of all waste
Estimated 4 6 million tonnes
(Not subject to Blue Box)

Residential Paper & Packaging
11.3% of all waste
1.36 million tonnes

Blue Box diverts 65% of this waste, but only 7.3% of Ontario's total waste stream

CHALLENGES?

- Customer/employee compliance
- Enforcement
- Cost
- Easy access to US dumps



ECO: STOP LETTING ICI OFF THE HOOK

**Expand and enforce
source separation
/diversion obligations
for IC&I**



Photo credit: <https://www.dal.ca/news/2015/09/01/the-next-generation-of-waste-management-on-campus.html>

In a circular economy, we reuse resources, instead of waste them.

3: The Circular Economy?

THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY



- Design products for durability and reuse → well beyond recycling
- Renewed focus on reduce (less stuff!)



FIGURE 5.1. Linear Economy versus the Circular Economy. Source: Sustainable Brands.

WHY?

- CO₂ embodied in goods and materials = massive, under-recognized source of GHGs
 - Extracting raw materials generates GHGs, as well as releases toxic chemicals into the air and water
 - Reusing and recycling materials means fewer raw materials extracted from the earth
- Huge economic and employment promise

ENORMOUS CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Major cultural, economic, social transition
- Requires legal, economic, procurement support for innovative businesses to thrive
- Design, process and standards changes
- Training skilled workforce

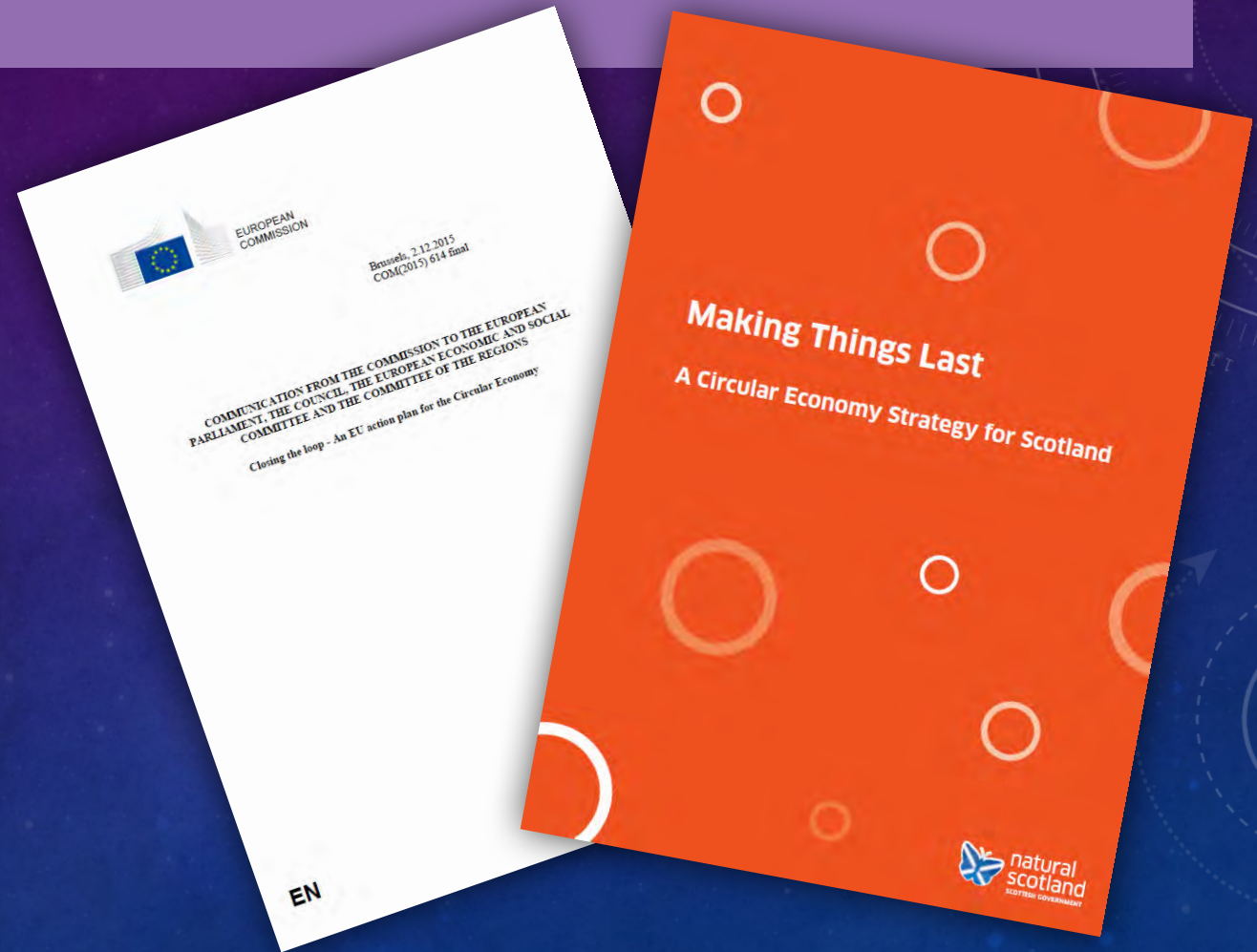
ECO RECOMMENDED

- Goal: create **profitable markets** for all end-of-life materials
- If not, don't use them



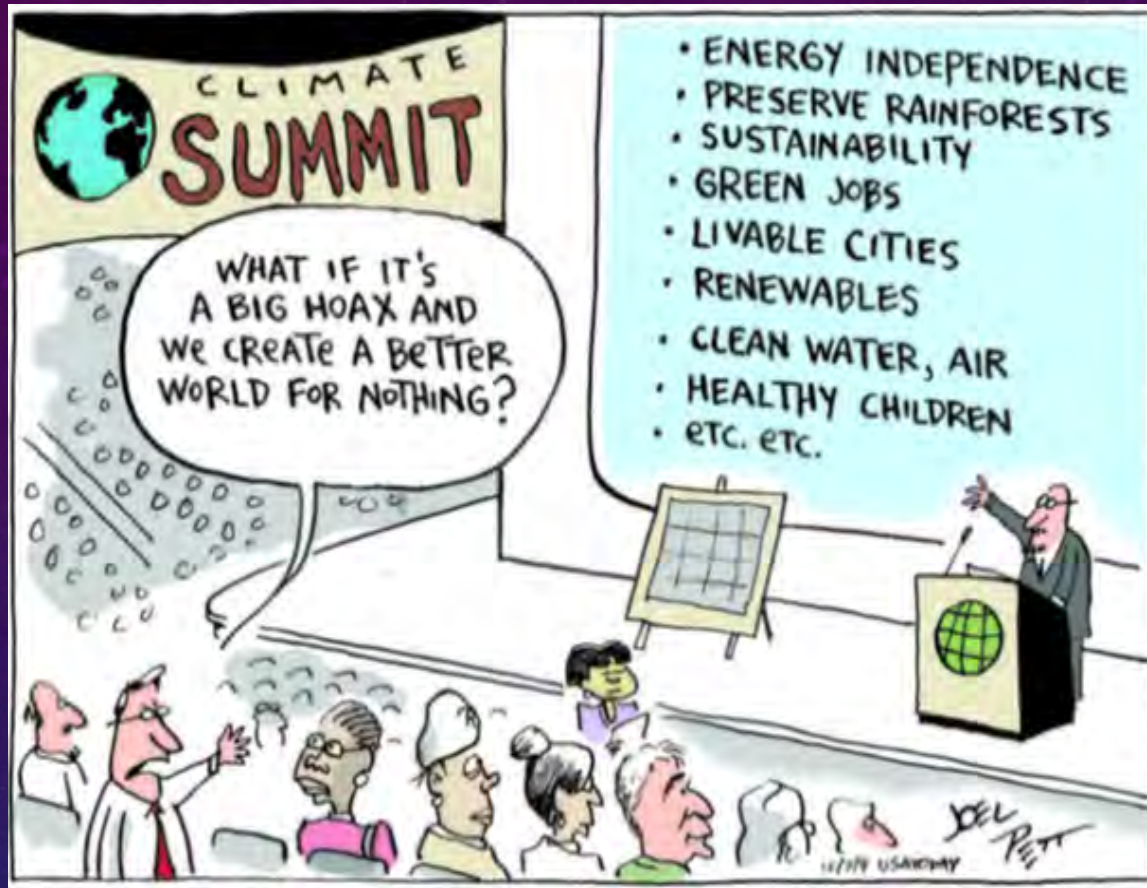
LEARN FROM OTHERS

- Scotland
- European Union
- China



SCOTLAND A ZERO WASTE SOCIETY?

- By 2025:
 - reduce total waste by 15% below 2011
 - reduce food waste by 33% below 2013
 - recycle 70% of remaining waste
 - landfill no more than 5%



KNOWLEDGE + ACTION = HOPE

NO ONE CAN DO EVERYTHING, BUT EVERYONE CAN DO SOMETHING

THANK YOU

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