

## **HIGHLIGHTS: Waste Management and ‘Extended Producer Responsibility’ Regulations in the Residential Construction Industry**

### **Scope of Report:**

This report examines traditional approaches to construction waste management, introduces the concept of “product stewardship” and outlines emerging policies related to “extended producer responsibility” (EPR).

It outlines the actions being undertaken by the federal/provincial/territorial governments through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) towards a national framework for EPR in relation to construction and demolition wastes.

Finally, the report provides an overview of current and pending waste management policies in the provinces and highlights instances where municipal governments are also enacting requirements in this area.

### **Key Findings**

- Construction and demolition wastes can make up 25% of materials disposed currently in sanitary landfills. Governments are beginning to focus attention on this portion of the waste stream.
- Across Canada, governments want to reduce or eliminate landfill waste disposal. Current landfills are reaching capacity, new landfills are difficult or impossible to site, and landfills create significant air and water pollution problems.
- Traditionally, waste disposal has been the responsibility of the “generator” – the last user. The concepts of “Product Stewardship” and “Extended Producer Responsibility” (EPR) shift this responsibility to the manufacturer or first-importer of a product.
- Under an EPR regime, government will require an increasing portion of a product waste stream to be diverted from landfill to recycling or waste conversion. Landfill bans and surcharges will likely be used to reinforce these policies.
- EPR requires that product producers and importers take financial and/or physical responsibility for managing wastes throughout a product's lifecycle, including its final recycling or conversion when it is no longer serviceable. EPR-compliant systems may be developed by individual manufacturers/importers, or created collectively by groups of manufacturers/importers.
- The cost of an EPR system will most likely be “built in” to the initial cost of a product as an environmental fee. Manufacturers/importers operating an EPR system can also ask government to enact regulations requiring product users, such as builders, to take necessary steps to make the system function.
- For new home builders and renovators, EPR systems for construction materials will likely result in higher product and materials costs, and may include regulations for how waste materials are managed at building or demolition sites.

- The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) has begun a process aimed at developing a Canada-wide Framework for EPR addressing construction and demolition wastes. The purpose of such a framework is to create common solutions that could be adopted by each province and provide producers with a more standardized system. The CCME sees this framework being completed in the 2015 -17 period.
- Despite signing on to the CCME process, some provinces are already moving forward with their own EPR-type requirements for construction and demolition wastes. This risks the development of a patchwork of dissimilar regulations across the country with potentially higher costs for material producers and builders.
- The report includes an overview of current and pending construction waste management regulations and initiatives in each province.