

Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks

# Ontario's Food and Organic Waste Policy

November 2021

- Provide an overview of Ontario's ongoing actions to reduce food and organic waste, including:
  - Food and Organic Waste Policy Statement
  - Pilot testing of select compostable products and packaging
  - Pending actions to reduce food and organic waste

# Current Context – Food Waste and Methane Emissions

About **\$31 billion worth of food is wasted annually in Canada**, of which about half occurs at the household level and the rest where food is grown, processed, transported and sold.

Organic waste, such as food waste and scraps, **make up about 1/3 of Ontario's waste stream**.

In 2019, Ontarians generated about 12.2 million tonnes of waste. This includes nearly **3.7 million tonnes of food and organic waste with almost 60% being sent for disposal**, mostly to landfill.



When food waste ends up in landfills, it **creates methane**, a potent greenhouse gas. The waste sector **accounts for approximately 4% of greenhouse gas emissions** in Ontario.

Some parts of Ontario have only **10 years of landfill capacity left**. While we continue to capture methane at large landfills, this capture could be made more effective.

The **industrial, commercial and institutional (IC&I) sector sends an estimated 75% of its organic waste to disposal**, mainly to landfills.

# Benefits of Reducing Food Waste and Methane Emissions

**Extend the lifespan of our existing landfill capacity** and reduce the need for new landfill capacity, while continuing to support methane capture at landfills.

**Expand green bin programs** beyond the over 90 municipalities that currently have green bin programs in place.

Increasing organics processing capacity will **create value added jobs and investment in the cleantech sector** in the province as well as supporting end-products for **healthy soils**.

**Reduce the amount of green house gas emissions** that landfilling food and organics produces. Doubling the province's current diversion rate for food waste would lead to a reduction of an additional 1.1 megatonnes of GHGs (equivalent to removing approximately 260,000 cars each year)



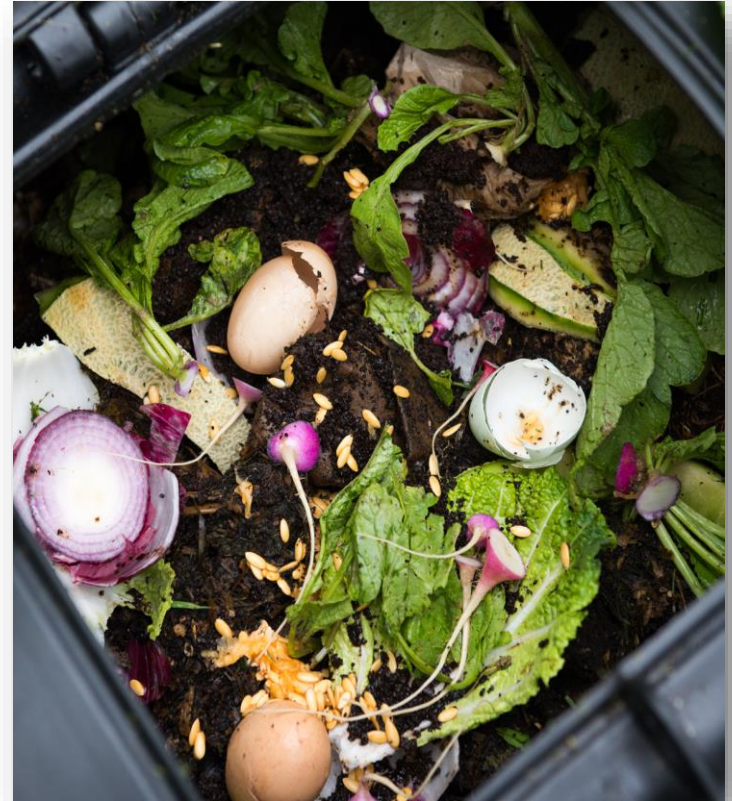
Help **reduce the export of our industrial and commercial waste to the United States** and the green house gases associated with the transport of that waste across the border

Collecting and recovering 1,000 tonnes of food waste has been shown to **generate 60% more GDP and 40% more jobs** than disposal. Current efforts support approximately 1,700 direct and indirect jobs in Ontario, and generate over \$100 million in GDP.

Supports the **implementation of the Food and Organic Waste Policy Statement** as well as the 2023 and 2025 targets.

# Government Actions

- In 2018 the province issued **the Food and Organic Waste Policy Statement**.
  - The Policy Statement directs municipalities, businesses and institutions to reduce and divert food and organic waste and to meet targets by 2025.
- The **Surplus Food Redistribution Program** provided over \$5M in funding to food rescue organizations and Indigenous communities to help with food security and ensure good food does not go to waste.
- The government is working with the **federal government** to develop a path forward for compostables and conduct pilot testing of compostables in Ontario's organics processing facilities.
- The government is also committed to phase out food and organics from landfills by 2030.



# Policy Statement Overview

- The Food and Organic Waste Policy Statement, issued under the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, is an outcome-based tool, which came into effect April 30, 2018.
- The Policy Statement is not a regulation, but provides legally-binding direction to, and sets targets for, both the public and private sectors to reduce and divert food and organic waste. The sectors include:
  - Provincial ministries
  - Municipalities
  - Businesses and institutions
  - Waste management industry
- The Policy Statement provides direction on the following areas:
  - Targets for reduction and diversion of food and organic waste
  - Prevention and reduction of food waste
  - Rescue of surplus food
  - Compostable products and packaging
  - Supporting infrastructure
  - Promoting beneficial end uses
- Parties subject to the statement must "be consistent with" any applicable policies.
- In cases of inconsistency, the province may request reports on their efforts to be consistent and publicly disclose information relating to these efforts.



# Policy Statement – Provides Direction

Policy statement contains **direction** on:

- Ontario Food Recovery Hierarchy
- Targets for waste reduction and resource recovery
- Reducing food waste
- Recover resources from food and organic waste
- Compostable products and packaging
- Supporting resource recovery infrastructure
- Promoting beneficial uses



# Policy Statement: Key Areas of Direction

The Policy Statement sets targets for municipalities, industry, businesses, institutions and owners of multi-residential buildings to reduce and divert food and organic waste.



## Single Family Residential

Existing curbside systems – by 2023

- 70% target (maintain/expand curbside).

Southern Ontario – by 2025

- 70% target for large municipalities with higher density.
- 50% target for large and medium municipalities with medium density.

Northern Ontario – by 2025

- 50% target for large municipalities with higher density.



## Multi-Unit Residential

50% target - by 2025

- Applies to multi-residential buildings with units of 6 or more in municipalities with populations of 5,000 or greater.

Other direction:

- Implement best practices.
- Provide promotion and education to residents.



## IC&I Sector

Industrial & commercial – by 2025:

- 70% target for large facilities (O. Reg. 103/94) which generate 300kg/week or more.
- 50% target for other facilities which generate 300kg/week or more.
- All others – best efforts.

Institutions – by 2025

- 70% target for large facilities (O. Reg. 103/94) which generate 150kg/week or more.

Collected food and organic waste shall be sent for diversion. Steps should also be taken to minimize contamination.



# Policy Statement – Key Areas of Direction continued

## **Prevention and Reduction**

- Industrial and commercial facilities and municipalities to develop promotion and education tools and initiatives to prevent and reduce food waste
- Industrial and commercial facilities to undertake food waste audits and take measures to prevent waste to improve the bottom line
- Industrial and commercial facilities (i.e. processors, retailers) to pursue partnerships to facilitate safe redistribution of surplus food

## **Support Infrastructure and Promote Beneficial Uses**

- Promote development of processing capacity:
  - Municipalities to protect existing and planned systems from incompatible uses; consider land use planning guidance in approvals; and plan for projected capacity needs
  - Province to coordinate and complement its approvals with municipalities; consider regional capacity and processing needs in rural, remote and North when issuing approvals
- Waste sector encouraged to maximize recovery through innovative technology, such as mixed waste.
- Municipalities to plan for beneficial use of biosolids and consider wastewater capacity to process food waste.
- Municipalities to support green procurement practices, including the use of compost, digestate.

# Compostable Products and Packaging

- Ontario continues to work with the federal government to develop a path forward for compostables.
- Part of that work consists of undertaking pilot testing of select compostable products and packaging in aerobic and anaerobic processing facilities in Ontario.
- Through funding provided by the federal government, the ministry has procured the services of GHD Limited to conduct the pilot testing in both aerobic and anaerobic facilities.
- The work is being informed by a group of technical experts to provide feedback and advice on the deliverables including literature review report, testing protocols and path forward report.
- It is anticipated that the testing will help inform how compostables can be better managed and ultimately processed so they are not sent to landfills.

# Questions



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