

# Towards A Canada-Wide Strategy on Sustainable Packaging

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## Context

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- In October 2006, the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) agreed that addressing packaging is an important environmental priority.
- CCME's is currently developing a national packaging plan that will aim to ensure:

*“Producers are responsible for reducing the net environmental impacts of packaging.”*

- Packaging is a provincial policy priority for Ontario. We are championing CCME's packaging agenda through a collaborative effort with other provinces, territories and the federal government.
- This presentation provides an overview of that process, our progress to date, and intended direction over the coming year.

## Ontario's Current Packaging Rules

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### Blue Box Program

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- In Ontario, the Blue Box Program Plan (O.Reg.451/03) under the *Waste Diversion Act, 2002* requires industry stewards to finance 50% of the net costs of recycling wastes through the blue box; municipalities provide the other 50%.
- The program achieved a 63% diversion rate for blue box materials in 2006.

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## Packaging Audits and Packaging Reduction Work Plans

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- Applies only to manufacturers and packagers where 16,000 or more hours are worked per month, and importers whose annual cost of goods are \$20 million or more.
- Subject operations must keep audit results and work plans on site, and make them available to the Ministry on request.

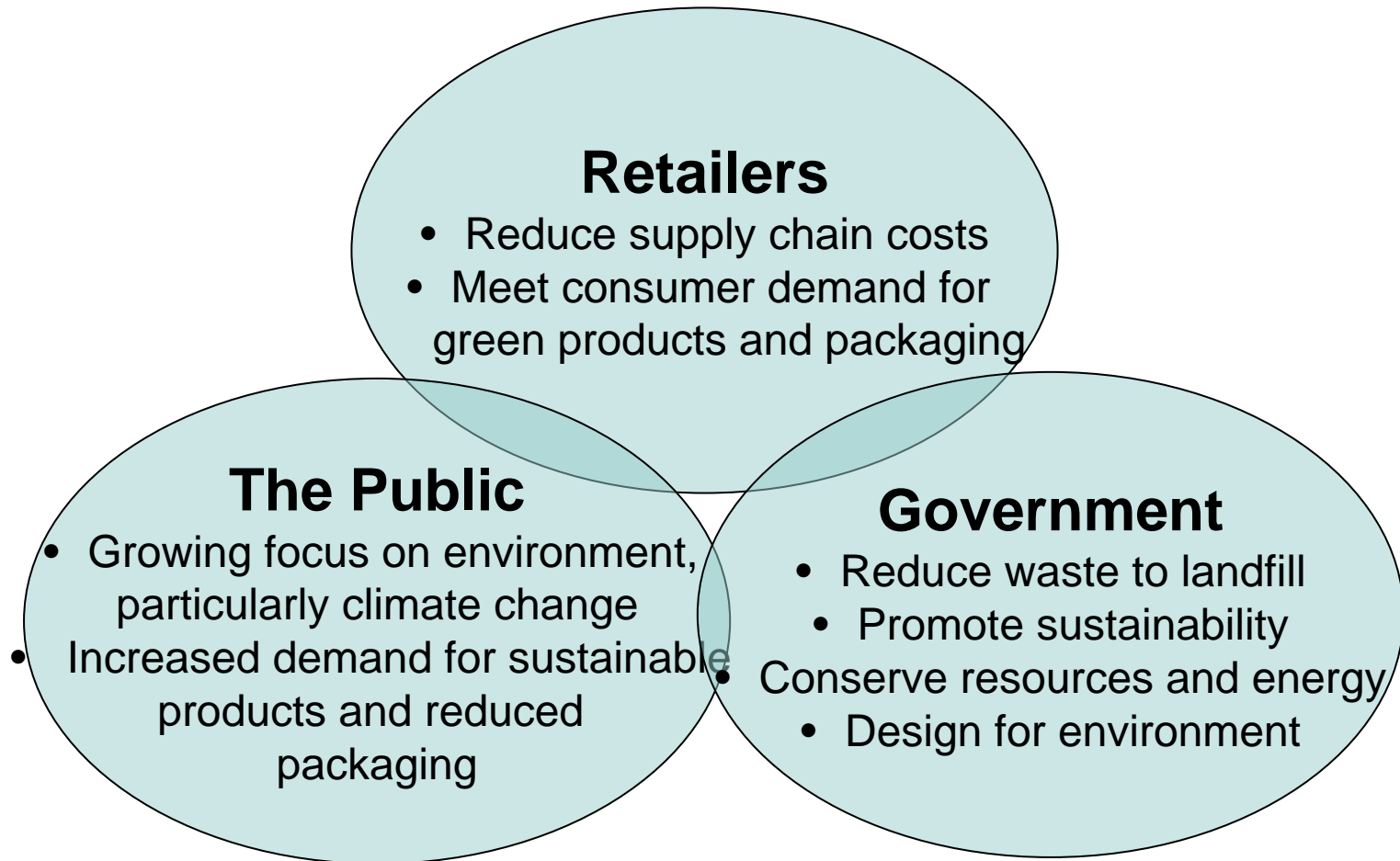
# The Need for National Integration

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- In today's global marketplace, a significant share of Canada's packaging is designed and manufactured offshore:
  - Decisions about packaging are generally made by national or global headquarters/procurement teams, and depend on a number of factors in addition to environmental impacts, including product protection, health and safety standards and shipment costs, etc..
  - In Ontario, 62% of our top 100 Blue Box stewards are headquartered outside Canada (according to Stewardship Ontario).
- Federal government jurisdiction on packaging is limited to health and safety issues and does not extend to waste management, reduction, reuse or recycling.
- Given the relatively small size of our individual economies (in a global context), provinces and territories have recognized that we have a greater ability to address the sustainability of packaging under an integrated, national framework than independently.
- We also hear from stakeholders that a nationally coordinated approach is critical. Stewards are being required to participate in a growing number of stewardship programs with different rules and expectations, and have called for the harmonization of provincial approaches to help minimize their transaction costs.

# Converging Packaging Interests

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## Role of CCME

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- Inter-jurisdictional organization comprised of environment ministers from federal, provincial and territorial governments.
- Strives to promote effective inter-governmental cooperation on national environmental priorities.
- Decisions are consensus-based; implementation is voluntary.
- Work is carried out by a number of task groups and committees.
- The EPRTG is mandated to provide guidance on the development and implementation of EPR and product stewardship programs in Canada – packaging is its first priority.
- A National Action Plan on EPR is currently under development, in addition to a Canada-wide Strategy on Sustainable Packaging.
- The two plans will be distinct but complementary.

## Past Work on Packaging

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- 1989: Established a multi-stakeholder National Packaging Task Force mandated to develop a packaging policy for Canada.
- 1990: CCME endorsed the Task Force's National Packaging Protocol (NaPP), which included a voluntary agreement with industry with a target to reduce packaging waste disposed by 35% by end of 1996 and 50% by the year 2000, from 1988 levels.
- NaPP's major achievement: 51% reduction in weight of packaging waste sent for disposal achieved by 1996.
- Group discontinued in 2000.

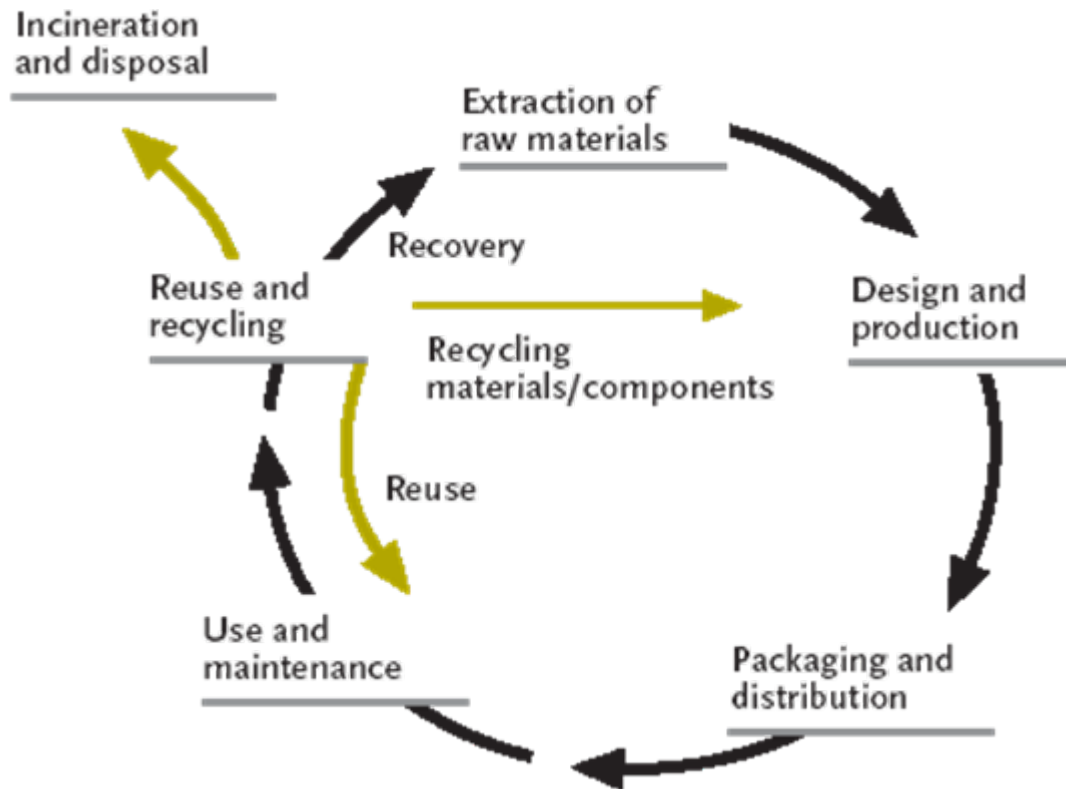
## Towards a Sustainability-Based Approach

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- Historic approaches to packaging have focused on end-of-life management, measuring progress through changes in the weight of packaging sent for disposal.
- It is now recognized that traditional measures like weight or recycling rates, alone, may not be appropriate (e.g., lighter packaging does not necessarily mean lower impacts, and priority on recycling rates can create a disincentive to source reduction).
- In contrast, a sustainability-based approach considers the entire packaging life cycle and encourages the selection of the best packaging design for the product system in question.
- By addressing the packaging life cycle, CCME will aim to maximizing environmental benefits and complement other national environmental priorities (e.g., climate change and toxics).
- This will introduce policy challenges since there is no panacea (e.g., plastic resin X is better than paperboard product Y) and policy tools targeting the product/packaging life cycle are new in Canada.

# The Packaging and Product Life Cycle

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## EPRTG Progress to Date on Packaging

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- March 2007 (Toronto Workshop): Engaged a cross-section of interested groups and individuals in discussion of key packaging issues.
- Key recommendations to EPRTG:
  1. Take a leadership / facilitation role in encouraging sustainable packaging
  2. Develop long-term strategy to achieve sustainable packaging
  3. Identify short-term actions.
- Fall 2007: Completed scan of national and international packaging initiatives.
- Fall 2007- Winter 2008: Engaged Five Winds International to identify a definition, guidelines and other approaches for sustainable packaging.

## EPRTG Progress to Date on Packaging

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- Winter 2008: Solicited stakeholder and public feedback on draft definition, guidelines and tools for sustainable packaging.
  - Multi-stakeholder focus group meeting (February 1, 2008, Ottawa)
  - 45 day Web-based consultation (closed March 3, 2008).
- Stakeholders generally supportive, calling for quick progress.
- Policy Framework for Canada-Wide Strategy on Sustainable Packaging now under development.
- Development of sustainable packaging tools (e.g., packaging material profiles, consumer tools, data/monitoring concepts) will also be considered to assist jurisdictions with strategy implementation.
- EPRTG plans to undertake continued consultations as its work progresses.

# Sustainable Packaging Definition

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- **Key Finding:** *CCME should propose the definition for sustainable packaging as articulated by the Sustainable Packaging Coalition (SPC) to its stakeholders for review, debate and consideration.*
- Sustainable packaging:
  - Is beneficial, safe & healthy for individuals and communities throughout its life cycle;
  - Meets market criteria for performance and cost;
  - Is sourced, manufactured, transported, and recycled using renewable energy;
  - Maximizes the use of renewable or recycled source materials;
  - Is manufactured using clean production technologies and best practices;
  - Is made from materials healthy in all probable end of life scenarios;
  - Is physically designed to optimize materials and energy; and
  - Is effectively recovered and utilized in biological and/or industrial cradle to cradle cycles.

# Sustainable Packaging Guidelines

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- **Key Finding:** *CCME should not write new guidelines for sustainable packaging.*
  - A number of good examples exist and CCME would likely need to expend considerable resources to improve upon existing guidelines.
  - Creating own guidelines may be duplicative, costly, slow, not fast enough to capture current swell of interest.
- **Key Finding:** *CCME should consider formally reviewing and subsequently endorsing Design Guidelines for Sustainable Packaging created by the SPC.*
  - Encourage innovation at different points of life cycle
  - Trade-offs (not prescriptive, not one solution)
  - Well-organized, well presented, engaging
  - North American perspective

# Towards a Canada-Wide Strategy on Sustainable Packaging

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- CCME's aim is to develop a strategy that:
  - Establishes clear and measurable sustainable packaging objectives and outcomes that are developed through a robust public participation process;
  - Is consistent with CCME's Extended Producer Responsibility Principles;
  - Is based on cost-effective methods that encourage design for the environment, and consider impacts along the entire life cycle of packaging products;
  - Includes a consistent and transparent monitoring and reporting framework that tracks progress toward objectives and outcomes, ensures measurability, and provides publicly accessible information on progress and results;
  - Includes a national outreach and education strategy aimed at both industry and consumers; and
  - Aims for administrative simplicity

# Towards a Canada-Wide Strategy on Sustainable Packaging

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- CCME has not predetermined any policy approaches for the Canada-wide strategy, and will consider all suitable tools.
- Other jurisdictions have used an extensive range of approaches (voluntary, regulatory and combinations thereof) and tools (e.g., taxes, bans, EPR programs, industry self-reporting, etc.) to tackle the packaging life cycle.
- The Canada-wide strategy will consider EPR as a key policy approach, and adhere to the waste management hierarchy established in CCME's EPR

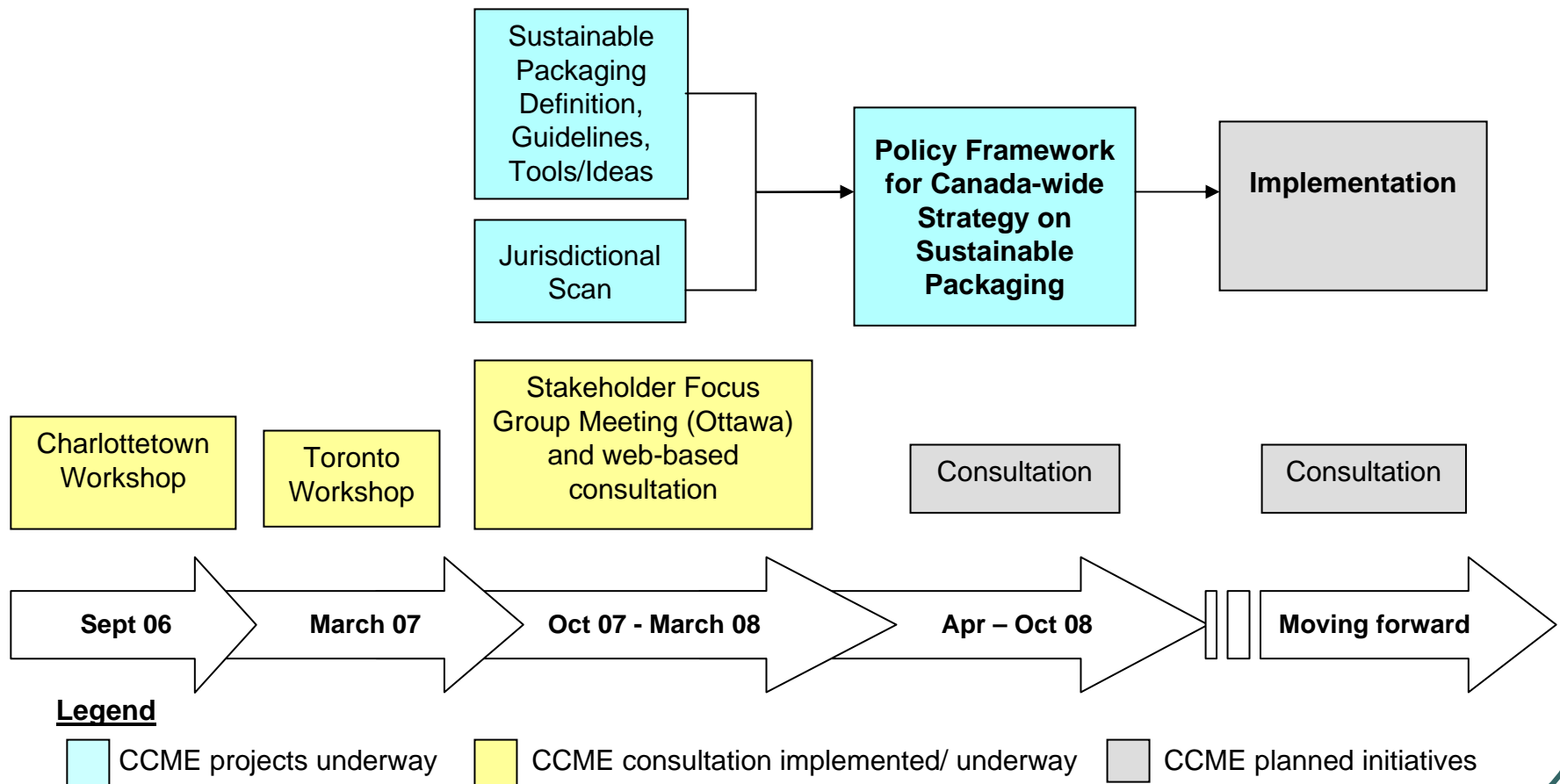
## Guiding Principles:

- **Reduce (including reduction in toxicity and redesign of products for improved reusability or recyclability)**
- **Reuse**
- **Recycle**
- **Recovery of materials and/or energy**
- **Disposal**



Increasing Public Concern

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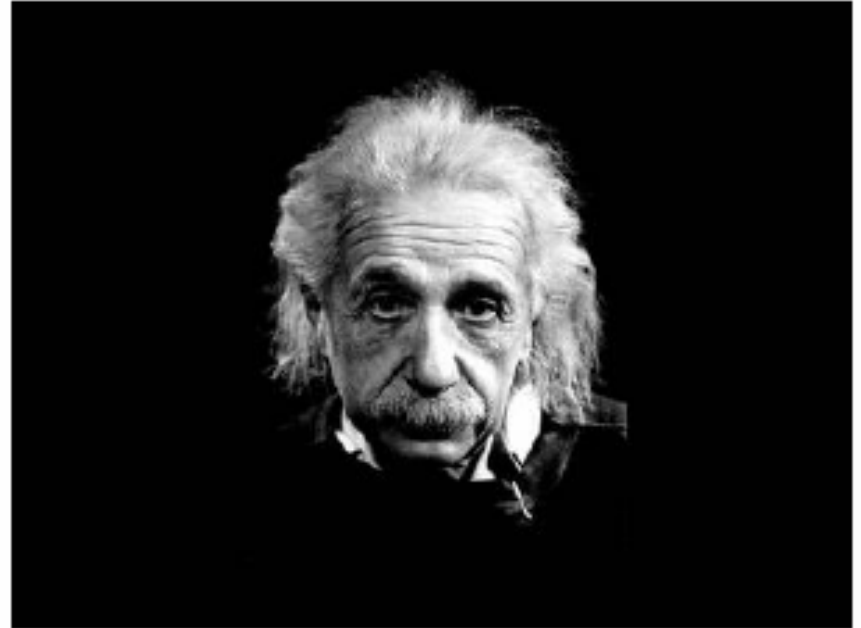
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Thank you!



"We cannot solve the problems that we have created with the same thinking that created them." - Albert Einstein