

Bag Reduction Programs - A Brief Background

20 June 2019

Canadian Context

Jurisdiction	Bag Reduction Policy Approach	Notes
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (Fort McMurray), Alberta	Ban	Implemented September 2010
Northwest Territories	Fee (25 cents)	Implemented February 2011
Brossard, Quebec	Ban	Implemented September 2016 Faced initial opposition from Quebec's plastics industry and the Canadian Plastic Bags Association - No legal action taken by industry
Toronto, Ontario	Previous fee (5 cents)	Implemented June 2009, overturned by Council in 2012

Jurisdiction	Bag Reduction Policy Approach	Notes
Montreal, Quebec	Ban on plastic bags < 50 microns	Implemented January 2018 All biodegradable shopping bags also banned
Victoria, British Columbia	Ban on plastic bags \$0.15/paper bag	Implemented July 2018 Raising paper bag fee to \$0.20 July 2019
Wetaskiwin, Alberta	Ban	Implementation set for 9 July 2019 After June 2020 \$0.15/paper bag
Vancouver, British Columbia	Ban under consideration	Administration researching options for reducing plastic bag use, a legislative review, and conducting stakeholder engagement with industry

NWT Legislation

- *Waste Reduction and Recovery Act*
 - Enables creation of programs to reduce, reuse and recycle materials in the NWT
- Environment Fund
 - Special purpose fund for waste reduction and recovery programs and initiatives only

Program Goals



- Reduce bag litter on land and in waterways
- Create a greater awareness of waste reduction and environmental stewardship

Why Single-Use Retail Bags?



- Complaints of unsightly litter
- Strong political will – engaged community

Single-Use Retail Bag Program

What is included?

- All Single-Use Retail Bags:
 - Plastic
 - Paper
 - Biodegradable
- Exemptions:
 - Bags for prescriptions; bulk items, fruit and vegetables; prepared food; hardware



Benefits of a Fee

- Generate revenue to run program and fund other waste reduction and recovery programs and initiatives
- Avoid shift to potentially worse alternatives
- Consumers/retailers retain choice to use bags
- Public education opportunity – consumers make a choice with every purchase

Who is Included in the Program?

PHASE I



Grocery
Stores
(Jan 2010)

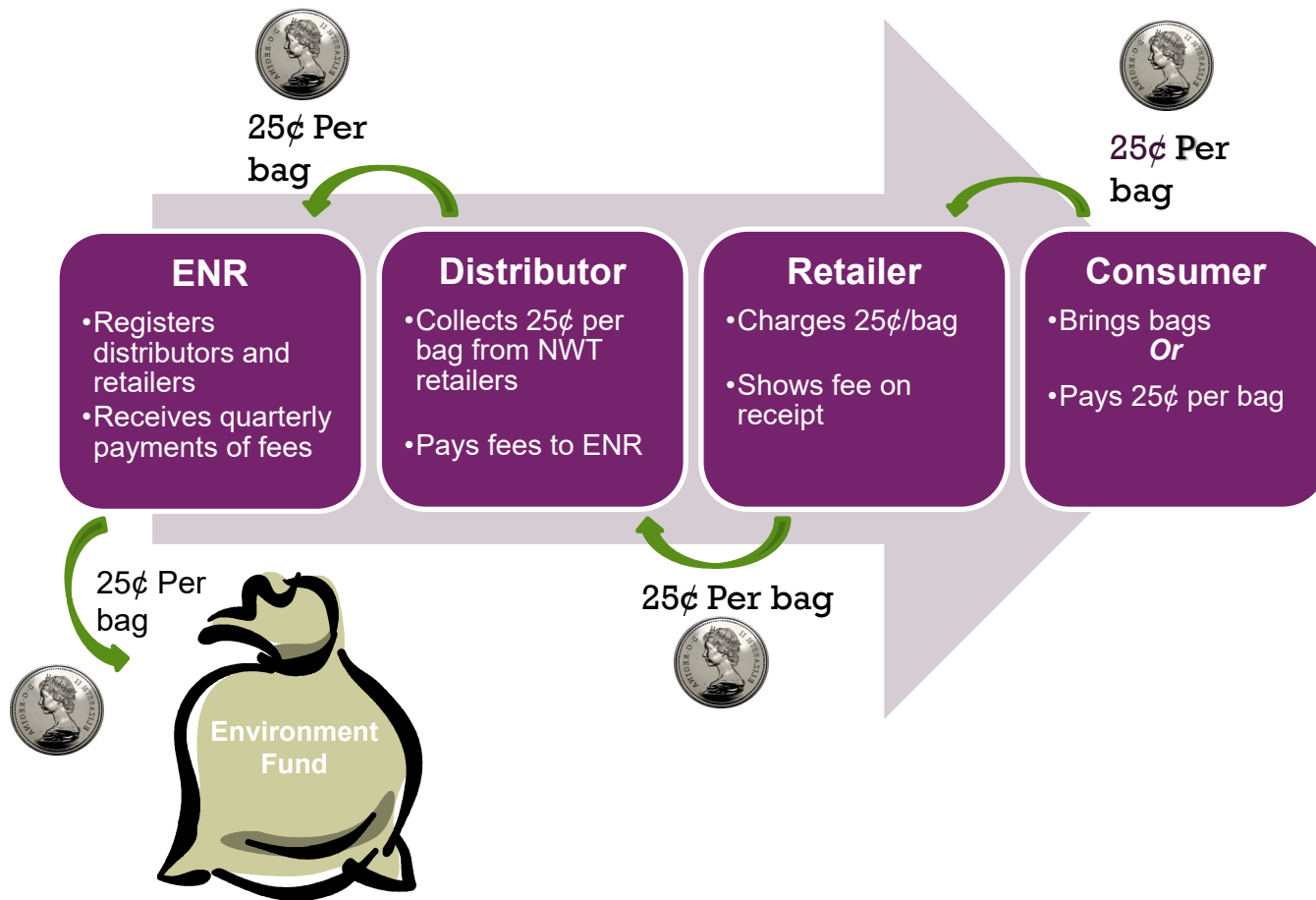
PHASE II



All Retail Stores (Feb 2011)

How the Program Works

RCA RECYCLING COUNCIL
OF ALBERTA



Results

- ✓ 80 Bag-free businesses
- ✓ 30 million bags avoided
- ✓ 75% reduction in bag use
- ✓ \$2.6 million revenue



Wood Buffalo

- Ban on “single-use bags”
 - < 57 microns thick
 - Plastic or paper
- Key principle is reduction
- Amended Bylaw 2012
- Retailers must not “restrict or deny the use of any Reusable Container by a Person”

Wetaskiwin

- 9 July 2019
- Ban on plastic bags
- < 50 microns
- After June 2020
\$0.15/paper bag



United Kingdom



- October 2015, stores in the UK began charging five pence per single-use plastic carrier bag
- Any business that has more than 250 employees
- UK government estimates plastic bag consumption has been reduced by more than 80%. Also predicts significant economic benefits from the ban:
 - £60 million reduction in litter clean-up costs
 - £13 million in carbon savings

UK Statistics

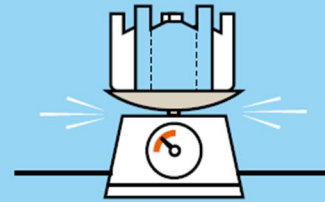
- In 2014 – equivalent to 140 bags distributed/person
- In 2018 – decreased to 19 bags/person
- £58.5 million donated to charities and environmental groups
- Potential charge increase to 10p

Australia Capital Territory

69%
BELIEVE THE BAN HAS HAD A
POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

- Banned plastic bag usage in 2011
- Includes all single-use polyethylene polymer bags < 35 microns thick

THE ACT PLASTIC BAG BAN HAS REDUCED
OUR PLASTIC BAG USE:



BY **1132** TONNES
FROM 2011 – 2018



199 TONNES
IN 2017–18 ALONE
AROUND 55 MILLION PLASTIC BAGS

Reducing the Distribution of Single-use Shopping Bags:

A Resource Guide for BC Retailers



- Review of industry best practices:

Introduce a fee for single-use bags, whether plastic or paper

Offer a reusable bag to your customers

Provide in-store recycling for plastic single-use bags

Develop a communications strategy for your customers

Develop a training program for your staff

Develop a green program for your store



Thank You!

- Government of Northwest Territories
- Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

Lindsay Seidel-Wassenaar