

**Ministry of the Environment,
Conservation and Parks**

**Ministère de l'Environnement,
de la Protection de la nature et des
Parcs**



Office of the Minister

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357-2025-2274

November 27, 2025

Laura Holmes
Secretary, Historic Downtown Bowmanville BIA
c/o Email: secretary@bowmanville.com

Dear Ms. Holmes:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding blue box recycling for small industrial, commercial and institutional (IC&I) establishments, and for your BIA's continued advocacy on behalf of businesses in Downtown Bowmanville.

Since 2023, Ontario has been transitioning the residential blue box system from municipal control to a producer-run model, where Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs) will operate a province-wide collection system. This change will save Ontario municipalities over \$171 million annually, with the transition completed by 2026.

Under the Blue Box Regulation, PROs are not, and have never been, responsible for collecting blue box waste from IC&I sources. This is consistent with how the blue box system operated before the transition, where municipalities that chose to offer small IC&I collection did so at their own initiative and expense.

During this transition period, the PROs offered continued small IC&I collection to municipalities willing to pay for it. This was always intended as a temporary measure to give municipalities time to arrange alternative service delivery and ensure a smooth transition for 2026. As PROs have been communicating for several years, municipalities will need to continue working with their small IC&I establishments to identify the best path forward for collection in their communities for 2026 and beyond.

The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks understands that many municipalities have already made alternate arrangements in advance of January 1, 2026. However, at the request of several municipalities that had not yet made these arrangements, I wrote to PROs on June 4, 2025, requesting that they prepare an offer of service to continue small IC&I collection at municipal cost.

On September 19, 2025, PROs indicated that they would not be able to fulfill my initial direction. They identified operational, infrastructure and financial challenges that would make small IC&I collection impractical and unaffordable for most municipalities, and potentially disruptive to the residential collection run by PROs.

Historic Downtown Bowmanville BIA
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I am disappointed that PROs were not able to deliver an offer for small IC&I collection. While PROs will not be offering municipalities an offer for small IC&I collection, private sector solutions remain available to enable them to continue offering this service.

If municipalities do not offer this service, individual businesses and business associations will need to consider organizing recycling independently, just as most businesses in Ontario already arrange their own recycling collection through private contracts today.

Our government recognizes the importance of blue box recycling for residents and businesses and is committed to the best possible blue box system for both producers and municipalities. Over the coming year, we will be considering improvements to the system. As this occurs, we will explore how changes to the Blue Box Regulation could leverage the producer-run system to support communities, small businesses and institutions in maintaining cost-effective blue box services.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Todd McCarthy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Todd McCarthy
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

c: Mayor Adrian Foster, Town of Clarington
Bonnie Wrightman, Executive Director, Clarington Board of Trade