

Monday, April 14, 2008

For Immediate Release

It's time to *Take-Back* your plastic bags in York Region

Plastic Bag Take-Back Program launch encourages residents to recycle shopping bags

NEWMARKET – The Regional Municipality of York is promoting the Plastic Bag *Take-Back* Program at a launch event Wednesday, April 16th. The *Take-Back* program encourages residents to reduce waste by recycling disposable plastic bags at participating grocery and retail stores and switching to reusable shopping bags.

The goal of the *Take-Back* program is to reduce plastic bag use in Ontario by 50 per cent over the next five years. Reducing plastic bag use will help York Region achieve our goal of 65 per cent diversion by 2010.

When: Wednesday, April 16th, 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Where: York Region Administrative Centre, Great Hall
17250 Yonge Street, Town of Newmarket

Speakers:

- Bill Fisch, York Region Chairman and CEO
- Mario Ferri, City of Vaughan Regional Councillor and Chair of the Region's Solid Waste Committee
- Joe Hruska, Environment and Plastics Industry Council (EPIC) Municipal Relations representative
- Erin Mahoney, York Region Environmental Services Commissioner

Background:

In May 2007, the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors, the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers, the Retail Council of Canada, the Canadian Plastics Industry Association and the Recycling Council of Ontario agreed with the Province of Ontario to develop a solution for environmental concerns associated with disposable plastic shopping bags.

With the support of York Region, the partners are working towards a 50 per cent reduction in the use of plastic bags in Ontario over the next five years through in-store recycling programs and promotion of reusable bags. The future goal is to expand the *Take-Back* program to include more retailers and additional items, such as compact fluorescent light bulbs, batteries and polystyrene packaging.

York Region is supporting the *Take-Back* program through a promotional campaign, including local newspaper advertisements, flyer and poster distribution, a dedicated web page and a launch event.

Canadians use approximately six billion plastic bags each year. In Ontario, 2.5 billion plastic bags are used annually, with an estimated 100 million used in York Region. Empty plastic bags do not biodegrade in landfills, but can be recycled into products like plastic lumber for outdoor chairs and decks. The use of reusable bags is the most effective way to reduce the amount of landfilled plastic bags and supports the 3Rs hierarchy of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

For more information on the Plastic Bag Take-Back Program or any other York Region waste management initiative, please visit www.york.ca/waste

For more information on the Canadian Plastics Industry Association National Plastic Bag Program, please visit www.myplasticbags.ca

For more information on The Regional Municipality of York, please visit www.york.ca

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