



*Bow Valley Waste*  
MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

## WHY REDUCE, REUSE AND THEN RECYCLE?

**80** PERCENT OF MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE IS COMPOSED OF READILY RECYCLABLE MATERIAL. DOES KEEPING WASTE MATERIALS SEPARATE FOR RECYCLING MAKE SENSE? YES - AND HERE ARE A FEW FACTS. PICK THE REASON THAT WORKS FOR YOU AND HELP YOUR LOCAL MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE TEAM PROVIDE RESPONSIBLE RECYCLING, COMPOSTING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS.

**IT'S TOO GOOD TO WASTE.** Alberta produces more garbage per capita than most other jurisdictions in North America and possibly the world at 1.4 times the Canadian average and more than twice as much as Nova Scotia. It's not garbage. It's raw materials, energy, manufacturing effort, money, environment and health impacts that we throw away when we abandon material in a landfill and get new resources to start all over again.

**IT'S GOOD FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.** Once collected it cost \$90.00/tonne to ship Bow Valley waste to a Calgary landfill. These costs are rapidly increasing. It's you – Bow Valley residents, businesses and institutions that ultimately pay these increasing costs. Material separated for recycling can be sold to offset municipal waste management costs or at least can be disposed of cheaper than shipping to a landfill. Recycling leads to effective use of municipal funds and to increasing efficiency in the overall economy by reusing previously harvested resources.

**IT'S GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH.** Recycling and composting drastically reduce the human health implications of production and disposal. Reduction of emissions harmful to health have been calculated to be 2.5 times less for recycling compared to using traditional disposal approaches such as landfill. When harmful emissions generated over the entire lifecycle of products are taken into consideration the health advantages of the 3Rs hierarchy are clear.

**IT'S GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.** Material breaking down and mixing in landfills creates a variety of environmental problems ranging from toxic leachate that is expensive to control to harmful gas emissions. For example, biodegradable material such as wood, paper and food slowly decomposing in landfills account for 20 percent of Canada's methane emissions. Methane is approximately 21 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas. Diverting waste from landfills is technologically simple and comparable in effect to other more complex proposals to mitigate climate change such as improving vehicle fuel efficiency.



# ZERO WASTE?

## A ZERO WASTE VISION

**"Zero Waste is a goal that is both pragmatic and visionary, to guide people to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are resources for others to use. Zero Waste means designing and managing products and processes to reduce the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, conserve and recover all resources, and not burn or bury them. Implementing Zero Waste will eliminate all discharges to land, water or air that may be a threat to planetary, human, animal or plant health."**

(Zero Waste International Alliance)

## TOWARD ZERO WASTE IN THE BOW VALLEY

Zero Waste is a term widely accepted in the waste management and recycling industry. Zero Waste does not necessarily mean there is no "garbage"; rather, it is used to mean there is no "wasting" of valuable resources in our economy. When our use of resources is efficient we also reduce the environmental and health impacts associated with manufacturing, using and disposing of those resources.

The term "Toward" Zero Waste used in the Bow Valley can be interpreted as taking the next step to reduce the amount of unwanted material generated in your business or home followed by planning to ensure that unwanted materials are kept separate and are handled in a way that strives to take full advantage of available reuse, recycling or composting programmes.

