July 21, 2008

Patrick Gedge
Chief Executive Officer
Niagara Economic Development Corporation
2201 St. David’s Rd., Thorold
Ontario

Dear Mr. Gedge;

**Extended Producer Responsibility in Niagara’s Business Sector**

C.02.0030

While Niagara’s economic growth and various initiatives such as the Economic Growth Strategy are vital to the Region, environmental and social considerations are also paramount. The Niagara Region’s Waste Management Advisory Committee would like to encourage the Niagara Economic Development Corporation to consider principles of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Design for the Environment (DFE) in local business/industry development policies and programs.

As an advisory committee of Niagara Regional Council, the purpose of the Waste Management Advisory Committee (WMAC) is to provide advice and recommendations that will facilitate the implementation of the Region’s Long Term Waste Management System. WMAC is comprised of members of the community at large and a representative from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. Environmental stewardship is a clear priority for this Committee and should be a fundamental concept for all business/industry. Business/industry should assume a greater responsibility for ensuring that the manufacturing processes and products which are manufactured, used or disposed of in Niagara, have a minimum impact on the environment.

In EPR or DFE, changes to how a product is designed in order to minimize its environmental footprint, is key. Also central to EPR/DFE is the transfer of end-of-life responsibility for the product to the producer so that product redesign with waste reduction becomes a priority.

As described on the Environment Canada’s website:

“The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines EPR as an environmental policy approach in which a producer’s responsibility, physical and/or financial, for a product is extended to the post-consumer stage of a product’s life cycle. There are two key features of EPR policy:
(1) the shifting of responsibility (physically and/or economically, fully or partially) upstream to the producer and away from municipalities, and

(2) to provide incentives to producers to take environmental considerations into the design of the product.

The OECD identifies a number of guiding principles for EPR.”

These EPR guiding principles are attached as an Appendix 1 to the letter.

Basically this means that in addition to the NEDC mandate of advancing economic prosperity of the Niagara Region, pollution/waste prevention and the promotion of waste reduction should be a focus when attracting/working with businesses. Also, existing residents and businesses should be encouraged to buy locally and support manufacturers/distributors that reduce packaging waste and generally minimize waste/pollution.

Through high-level vision, leadership and assistance, the application of EPR throughout the business sector in the Niagara Region can occur. Green business/industry can contribute to vital economic growth in Niagara.

We would welcome comments or further discussion on these issues. If you would like more information or have any questions, please contact me through Cheryl Crawley, WMAC staff support at 905-685-4225 ext. 3763 or Cheryl.Crawley@regional.niagara.on.ca.

Sincerely,

Doug Symington
Chair, Waste Management Advisory Committee

c Waste Management Planning Steering Committee
Regional Chair Peter Partington
Ken Brothers, Catherine Habermebl, Niagara Region
Appendix 1

Sources:
http://www.ec.gc.ca/epr/default.asp?lang=En&n=9D626C74-1

Extended Producer Responsibility Principles

The OECD indicates that the "following guiding principles underlie an effective EPR program:

1. EPR policies and programs should be designed to provide producers with incentives to incorporate changes upstream at the design phase in order to be more environmentally sound.

2. Policies should stimulate innovation by focusing more on results than on the means of achieving them - thus allowing producers flexibility with regard to implementation.

3. Policies should take into consideration a life cycle approach so that environmental impacts are not increased or transferred somewhere else in the product chain.

4. Responsibilities should be well defined and not be diluted by the existence of multiple actors across in the product chain.

5. The unique characteristics and properties of a product, product category or waste stream should be factored into policy decisions. Given the diversity of products and their different characteristics, one type of program or measure is not applicable to all products, product categories or waste streams.

6. The policy instrument(s) selected should be flexible and chosen on a case-by-case basis, rather than setting one policy for all products and waste streams.

7. Extension of producer responsibilities for the product’s life cycle should be done in a way to increase communication among the actors in the entire product chain.

8. A communication strategy should be devised to inform all the actors in the product chain, including consumers, about the program and to enlist their support and co-operation.

9. To enhance a program's acceptability and effectiveness, a consultation of stakeholders should be conducted to discuss goals, objectives, costs and benefits.

10. Local governments should be consulted in order to clarify their role and obtain their advice concerning the program’s operation.

11. Both voluntary and mandatory approaches should be considered with a view on how to best meet national environmental priorities, goals and objectives.
12. A comprehensive analysis of the EPR program should be made (e.g. which products, product categories and waste streams are appropriate for EPR, whether historical products should be included, and the roles of the actors in the product chain).

13. EPR programs should undergo periodic evaluations to ensure that they are functioning appropriately and are flexible enough to respond to these evaluations.

14. Programs should be designed and implemented in a way that environmental benefits are obtained while domestic economic dislocations are avoided.

15. The process of developing and implementing EPR policy and programs should be based on transparency.  

References