

# ZERO WASTE



## The Case for Zero Waste

**One man's trash is another man's treasure.**

The Planning Group of the Zero Waste International Alliance adopted the following definition of Zero Waste.

*"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 is not just another form of recycling but a new way of thinking about our environment. The goal is to have no landfills or incinerators - there will be no waste, only resources.



## The History

The concept of Zero Waste began in the mid 1970s in Oakland, California when the Company Zero Waste Systems Inc. was founded by chemist Paul Palmer, PhD. This company's mission was to recover and reuse large quantities of chemicals. The concept soon grew to apply the lessons learned to virtually all forms of waste. Since then, hundreds of municipalities around the world have adopted Zero Waste goals and many are achieving or exceeding their interim goals.

On June 11, 2008, several Ontario municipalities joined the growing global movement toward eliminating waste when they announced the formation of the Ontario Zero Waste Coalition (OZWC) at the Municipal Waste Integration Network (MWIN) conference in Niagara Falls. OZWC is made up of member, non-governmental groups and intends to lobby the government and educate the public about adopting zero waste strategies. OZWC would like to see:

- \* The removal of toxic substances from the manufacturing process.
- \* A reduction in packaging.
- \* Producer responsibility for recycling their own goods that they manufacture and distribute.
- \* Take it back programs; retailers take back the parts of their goods that are not easily recycled.
- \* Recycling of construction waste.
- \* Industry paid recycling programs.

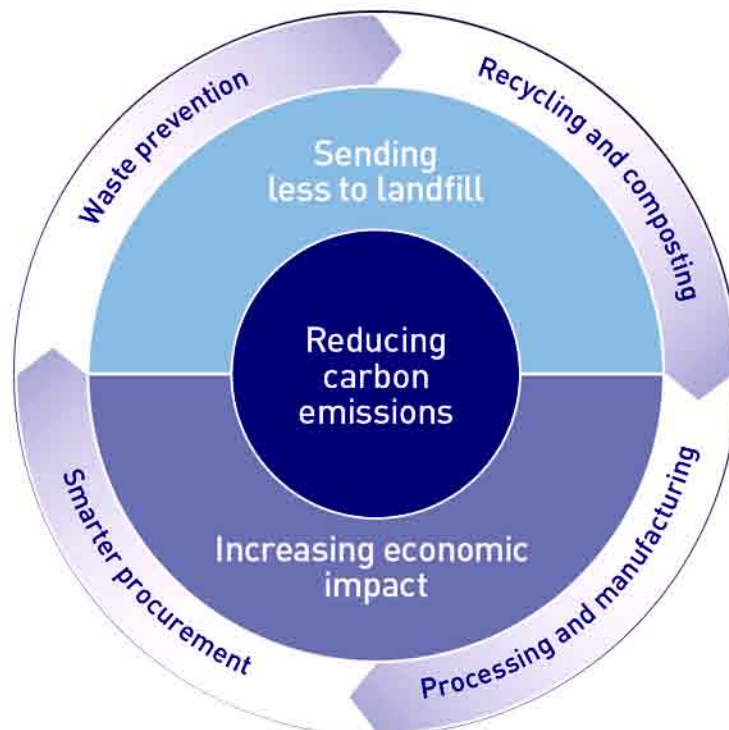
Zero waste is not just about recycling resources. It involves rethinking what we use, how we use it, how we make it and who else can use it.



## The Program

Zero Waste programs aim to reduce waste to zero by forming a circular system where as much waste as possible is reused as a resource to make another product. A simple form of this concept is composting whereby the waste from our kitchens is used as fertilizer to grow more plants. It is the organic material that causes so many of the problems at landfills; from the smell, to the rodents, to the volume. Between 30% and 50% of the waste going to landfills is organic and the backyard composter is the easiest and most efficient way to deal with household organic waste.

The City of Guelph adopted a Zero Waste strategy and so far has managed to divert close to 60% of their waste from landfills. The province of Nova Scotia has also managed to divert the waste going to the landfills by 50% and the City of Toronto aims to divert 100% of their waste by 2010. Clearly, Zero Waste is concept that is growing in popularity.



### What You Can Do Now

The following pages will give you many helpful tips on how to reduce the waste you send to the landfill.

**100% RESOURCE EFFICIENCY!**