

Waste and Our Government

In Canada, waste management is administered under the general category of the environment. Federal, provincial and municipal governments each play a different, but equally important part in controlling Canada's waste and protecting our environment.

Environment Canada is the federal bureau responsible for the nation's domestic and foreign environmental affairs. Internationally, the ministry enters into agreements and negotiations with other nations. The Canada-U.S.A. acid rain talks are an example.

At home, the agency produces legislation programs and policies that serve as guidelines for all political jurisdictions. Education aimed at heightening public awareness is also carried out by this office. The Canadian Environmental Protection Act¹ is the most pertinent legislation, produced at the federal level. Included in the act are the basic waste management parameters for the nation. In general, the federal government tells the provinces what has to be done but not how to do it.

Following the national government are the provincial ministries. Most provinces and territories have a ministry set up to look after the environment. In some cases, an office oversees the environment and other related areas.

For the province of Ontario, waste management is regulated by the Ministry of the Environment and Energy (M.O.E.E.). The licensing of recycling and disposal operators, waste generators, sanitary and secured landfills, pesticide retailers and users, along with other environmentally related practices and professions, is handled by the M.O.E.E. The Ministry is also responsible for assessing the environmental impacts new landfills, incinerators, even road and subdivisions might cause.

The Environmental Protection Act of Ontario² is written to meet needs that are special to this province, for example, dealing with our high percentage of industrial waste. Other important legislation that is related to waste management is as follows: Ontario Water Resources Act³, The Pesticides Act⁴, Regulation 346⁵ and Regulation 347⁶ and The Environmental Assessment Act⁷. Our environment ministry enforces the rules and regulations of both the federal and provincial acts. Hearings, public education and funding of special projects comes from this office. The M.O.E.E. establishes goals for waste reduction in Ontario and similar targets. Provincial ministries act, educate, mediate and legislate more concretely and productively than the federal government.

