

Part VII

Future WDO Roles
and Responsibilities

7. Future Roles & Responsibilities of the WDO

The two most frequently stated criticisms of the WDO process to date have been:

- 1. The process is moving too fast to allow for the participation of and consultation with all of the key stakeholders and to allow adequate time for more careful research and analysis.***

It is the WDO's assessment that:

- Many of the key issues tackled in this report have been under discussion in Ontario for more than a decade.
- The 100+ participants in the WDO process represent the widest possible cross-section of this experience yet assembled in Ontario to try to *resolve* these issues.
- The limited time frame set out in the MOU ensured that this participation was focused, intensive and effective.
- The specific details of the WDO's work would have been improved by having had more time however, the broad recommendations and conclusions reached by the WDO would still stand.

- 2. The scope of the WDO is far too narrow in that it is focused solely on issues related to the diversion of only part of the residential waste stream.***

It is the WDO's assessment that this is a valid and important criticism that should be addressed if the WDO is to continue. In particular:

- The stated provincial goal is to reduce the per capita disposal of waste in the Province of Ontario by 50%, relative to a 1987 baseline. This goal encompasses all wastes, not just residential wastes.
- By focusing solely on the diversion of recyclable residential materials, compostable organics and designated HSW products, the legitimate charge has been made that the MOU/WDO has pre-determined that recycling, composting and the separate collection and management of HSW are *de facto* always the best environmental and economic solutions. Many participants in this process have argued that the WDO should be charged with examining other waste management options including reduction at source, energy recovery and landfill for appropriate materials and for some regions of the province.
- Recommendations have been made throughout this report regarding the need for a lifecycle inventory of the environmental costs and benefits of proposed recycling and organic diversion, and HSW management programs. The parameters and procedures for these assessments will need to be carefully defined.
- The concept of extended industry responsibility for waste, and the extent of that responsibility remains a contentious issue. Some industry sectors have refused to participate in the WDO process and fundamentally reject this concept.
- There is widespread agreement among municipalities, industry and non-governmental organizations that user pay programs are essential to achieving significantly increased waste diversion and to making residents aware of the true costs of waste management. However, perceived operational difficulties (especially in large cities) and a lack of political will at the municipal and provincial levels of government present significant barriers to widespread adoption of this mechanism to make waste diversion programs more effective and sustainable over the long term.
- Various participants have suggested a laundry list of other waste materials that should be addressed by the WDO (including tires, fluorescent light tubes, textiles, waste electrical and electronic products and various components of IC&I wastes).

The WDO believes that the “relatively” narrow focus established for the WDO in this initial year was appropriate. It has allowed a widely disparate group of individuals to make significant progress on a number of contentious issues that have been debated in Ontario *ad nauseum*.

That said, the WDO recommends that if the organization is to be established as a permanent entity, its scope should be extended, once the programs and activities recommended in this report have been implemented in large measure, to address these and other key concerns related to the development of an environmentally effective, economically sound, sustainable waste management system for the Province of Ontario.

