



COUNTRY	REGION	POPULATION	MATERIAL FOOTPRINT REDUCTION TARGET	MATERIAL FOOTPRINT
CANADA	BRITISH COLUMBIA	5,100,000	-30% BY 2030 ; -75% BY 2050	29.1 TONNES/ INHABITANT (2018)

Operational EPR at the heart of “Zero Waste” and the Circular Economy in British Columbia

As a concrete application of the polluter-pays principle, extended producer responsibility (EPR) makes companies responsible for managing the waste generated by the products they put on the market. Organised by sector (packaging, electronic waste, etc.), there are two types of EPR. In the so-called “financial” EPRs, contributory or financial agencies collect eco-taxes from producers and distribute them to the local authorities responsible for waste management. In “operational” EPRs, the agencies use the funds to manage waste directly with service providers who collect, transport, sort and treat the waste.

Operational EPR programmes in British Columbia

In British Columbia (BC), the first EPR programme for [paint](#) producers was established in 1994. Ten years later, the adoption of the [Recycling Regulation](#) replaced all previous legislation to set common requirements for the schemes and the requirements for the implementation of an EPR. From then on, producers of products covered by an EPR must draw up a [plan](#), which is reviewed every five years and must be reported on annually, and implement a programme for the collection and recycling of the product when it reaches the end of its life. In 2001, the BC Product Stewardship Council ([BCPSC](#)), a coalition of districts responsible for waste management and reduction, was created to implement large-scale schemes. To date, BC has [17 EPR programmes](#) based on the OECD [model](#). Producers can designate agencies (Producer Responsibility Organizations – [PROs](#)) responsible for implementing their EPR plan and reporting performance results. This system allows producers to have a [strong influence](#) on how waste is collected, transported and treated. For waste collection, the agencies mostly work with [local governments](#).^a

An example of successful EPR: packaging and printed paper

In 2014, BC launched the first EPR scheme in North America where waste producers take full financial and operational responsibility for the residential recycling of printed paper and packaging (PPP). Producers were given until 2017 to submit a plan in compliance with the PPP regulation. In order to meet their waste management obligations, companies that are members of [Recycle BC](#), the agency responsible for PPP recycling, report annually the quantities of materials they place on the market and pay an equivalent [fee](#). The companies are manufacturers of food products and consumer goods. Recycle BC publishes two tenders: one for municipal agencies to collect, and one for sorting and processing the waste. Once collected, the waste is sent to storage sites across the province. In partnership with [GFL Environmental](#), the materials are then transported to a sorting and recovery centre.^b There, the packaging and recycled paper are prepared for the end markets.

In 2020, Recycle BC estimates that the entire PPP management and processing chain released [53,304 tCO₂e](#), about 5% more than the previous year.^c During the pandemic, citizens produced more residential waste: 203,213 tonnes of PPP, [11%](#) more

than in 2019. The recovery rate was 85.8% in 2020, 8.4% higher than in 2019. In 2020, PPP producers paid [CA\\$121.8 million](#) in fees, 24% more than in 2019, and 1.86 million (99%) households accessed Recycle BC services. As part of the amendment to the [Recycling Regulation](#), the BC government [expanded](#) the number of products to be recycled. Packaging containing dairy products from February 2022, and other single-use items (such as straws, cups, etc.) from January 2023, will now be subject to EPR. In addition, as part of its commitment to the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment’s [Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility](#) (CAPER, 2009), the British Columbia government hopes to increase the number of PROs from 12 in 2021 to between [20 and 25](#) over the next three to six years. CAPER aims to assist provinces in harmonising their practices and coverage of EPRs across Canada.

a The agencies are also responsible for informing citizens about waste recycling programmes.

b Recycle BC’s post-collection network includes 38 facilities across the province – 36 receiving facilities, and two primary materials recovery facilities located in Richmond and New Westminster.

c This increase is mainly due to the fact that more material was transported via roadways.