



April 20, 2020

The Honourable Gordon Wilson
Nova Scotia Environment
PO Box 442
1903 Barrington St.
Halifax, NS, B3J 2P8

Dear Honourable Minister Wilson:

RE: Variance – Letter to Regional Chairs, April 9, 2020

The Valley Region Solid Waste-Resource Management Authority (VWRMA) wishes to assure you that our first priority is the physical and mental health of our employees while maintaining essential solid waste collection to ensure the health of our community.

Our organization aims to serve our citizens based on the overarching principles of fiscal responsibility, social acceptance and environmental soundness. Any decision to landfill recyclable material would only be considered as a last resort if processing capacity for these materials were ceased. Currently recyclables from Region 5 are processed by Scotia Recycling in Kentville and that facility remains operational.

The Valley Waste Management Centres located in Kentville and Lawrencetown do not have capacity to store recycling for more than a couple days unless materials are stored outdoors. Storage of materials outside would result in excessive litter and may require a modification to our transfer station permit granted by NSE.

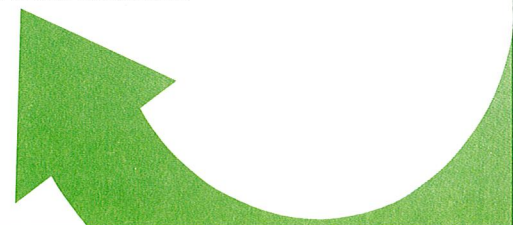
If a COVID case is detected in our staff or a contractor of ours, we may need to close our operations with short notice due to a shortage of labour. Having a contingency plan in place for this event is critical to the operation of our solid waste services.

Having residents store recyclables at home is not a practical solution. Omitting recyclables from collection services for a period of time would generate significant public calls, further taxing our ability to manage essential waste services. Additionally, our curbside collection system is designed to collect four streams of waste in a single pass with a single vehicle; therefore, restarting the collection of recycling after a period of time would require additional collection vehicles and significant additional expense. Recyclables, particularly containers that are stored during summer months are problematic to process due to odour and insects. If there is a significant backlog, it is unlikely Scotia Recycling could process the additional material in a timely manner.

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Redefining Our Resources

The Municipality of Kings and the Towns of Annapolis Royal, Berwick, Kentville, Middleton and Wolfville:
Partners in Waste Reduction.



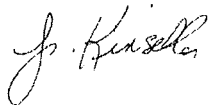
It is important to understand the pandemic has generated an unprecedented level of anxiety in our workforce. Our facilities are undoubtedly receiving waste from households and health care facilities such as nursing homes and hospitals with COVID-19 positive patients. We recognize COVID-19 may not be highly transmissible through handling of solid waste and employees are provided appropriate PPE and safety training. The workforce, however, does not have experience for such situations and consequently the handling of waste from unknown sources creates significant employee anxiety.

Please consider the following requests from the VWRMA:

1. In the event Scotia Recycling ceases the processing of curbside residential and commercial recycling, that the Authority be permitted to direct recyclable materials to the Kaizer Meadow landfill operated by the Municipality of Chester.
2. VWRMA be permitted to direct solid waste, including recyclables and compostables, from potentially higher risk facilities such as the Valley Regional Hospital direct to the Chester Landfill for the duration of the State of Emergency.
3. That Public Health enters into discussion with the Authority regarding directions for the management of residential and commercial solid waste from residences and commercial establishments that are housing COVID Positive patients.

Thank you for this consideration. The VWRMA is committed to maintaining our leadership in waste reduction and diversion and looks forward to working with your department through this difficult time.

Sincerely,



John Kinsella, Chair – Region 5

cc. Hon. Chuck Porter, Minister, Municipal Affairs
Hon. Labi Kousoulis, Minister, Labour and Advanced Education
Leland Anthony, Chair, Regional Chairs