



# News Release

For Immediate Release

December 6, 2010

## WASTE DIVERSION FALLING FAR SHORT OF GOVERNMENT'S GOAL: AUDITOR GENERAL

(TORONTO) Only about one-quarter of the waste generated by Ontario's households and businesses is being diverted from landfills—well short of the government's own goal of 60%, Auditor General Jim McCarter says in his *2010 Annual Report*, released today.

“Overall, Ontario households and municipalities deserve a pat on the back as they have substantially improved the rate at which they divert household waste from landfills,” McCarter said today after the release of the Report. “But this increase has been offset by a drop in the diversion rate by the industrial, commercial, and institutional sectors.”

In terms of waste diversion, “Ontario ranks sixth among the provinces and is well behind many European jurisdictions,” McCarter says in the Report.

About 12.5 million tonnes of non-hazardous waste is generated in Ontario each year. Based on the latest available information at the time of the Office's audit, about one quarter of this waste is diverted through reducing, reusing, or recycling. About two-thirds of the remaining waste goes to landfills in Ontario and almost all of the rest is shipped to U.S. landfill sites.

Municipal governments are generally responsible for managing residential waste while businesses and multi-unit residential buildings either establish diversion initiatives or dispose of their waste in landfills.

Following are some of the Auditor's more significant findings:

- The industrial, commercial, and institutional sectors generate about 60% of the waste in Ontario, but divert only about 12% of its waste.
- Although the overall diversion rate for residential waste is about 40%, rates for individual municipalities varied significantly, ranging from about 20% to more than 60%. As well, only about 15% of Ontario municipalities have organic waste-composting programs, which collect from about 40% of the province's households in total.
- While there are regulations in place to require large generators of industrial waste to source-separate waste for reuse or recycling, the Ministry has little assurance that the regulations are being complied with.
- A number of municipalities expressed concerns about insufficient landfill capacity. The existing capacity will be filled more rapidly once export of residential waste to U.S. landfill sites largely ends after 2010.

-30-

For more information, please contact:

Jim McCarter  
Auditor General  
(416) 327-1326

Andréa Vanasse/Joël Ruimy  
Communications  
(416) 327-2336