



# News Release

For Immediate Release

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## Ontario Could Soon Run Out Of Landfill Space Because Businesses and Institutions Aren't Recycling Enough: Auditor General

(TORONTO) Ontario is likely to miss its waste diversion targets because it hasn't taken concrete action to increase diversion of industrial, commercial and institutional waste, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk says in her *Annual Report of Environment Audits*.

"The lack of government action on reducing business and industrial waste means that Ontario will be faced with questions about where to put all this waste and how to pay for it in the very near future," said Lysyk. The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks estimates that all existing landfill capacity in the province will be exhausted in the next 11 to 14 years.

Businesses and institutions generate at least 7.2 million tonnes of waste per year – 60% of the waste in Ontario; 40% is residential waste. However, in 2018, while 50% of residential waste was diverted, only about 15% of industrial and business waste was diverted.

"More than 98% of businesses and institutions are not required to recycle, so they often don't," Lysyk said. "Sending waste to landfills is relatively cheap, so even easily recyclable products from places like offices, restaurants, movie theatres, retail stores and warehouses end up as landfill garbage."

The Ministry of the Environment, is responsible for regulating waste management in Ontario. According to the Ministry, about 12 million tonnes of non-hazardous waste is generated in Ontario each year, although other data sources indicate it may be closer to 15 million tonnes.

The audit found that the steps the Ministry has taken to date will not significantly improve waste diversion from businesses and institutions, and Ontario's overall diversion rate will suffer. The Ministry's goal is to divert half of all waste generated by the residential and business sectors by 2030, and 80% by 2050.

"Improved efforts by the government to meet its targets, can avoid the need to make difficult decisions about waste, and the financial and environmental costs that must come with them," according to Tyler Schulz, Assistant Auditor General and Commissioner of the Environment in the Office.

This audit report includes 17 recommendations for improvement.

-30-

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