

Written by Special to The Herald
Wednesday, 26 March 2014 02:00 -

The province's new Multi-Material B.C. recycling program will do nothing to help the environment and hurts businesses and consumers, according to opponents.

"It doesn't make sense to completely change a system that works to one that will cost B.C. businesses and consumers more and won't do anything for the environment," Newspapers Canada's Toronto-based CEO John Hinds told The Daily Courier newspaper in Kelowna.

"There simply aren't any upsides to MMBC. The government has to re-examine this."

Newspapers Canada is the advocacy group for newspapers across Canada.

It's against MMBC not only because it could devastate the newspaper industry, but also because it does nothing for other businesses or consumers.

"We can't pass on the MMBC fee of 20 cents per kilo of newspaper distributed to advertisers or subscribers because we operate in a competitive media market," said Hinds.

"At the end of the day, newspapers will have to absorb the costs internally, and that possibly means layoffs and inhibiting communities to tell their stories through newspapers."

"Just look what happened to the Kamloops Daily News (which closed in January because it couldn't make a profit). MMBC puts the existence of newspapers at risk," Hinds said.

Newspapers Canada estimates the MMBC fees will cost B.C. newspapers \$14 million a year, a hit to their already shaky bottom line.

In Ontario, newspapers help pay by offering free advertising to municipalities to promote their recycling programs.

Hinds said such a trade-off would be preferable in B.C. too.

"Newspapers aren't even a problem," added Hinds.

"Eight-five per cent of newspaper is already recycled through existing programs."

The provincial government will structurally change the current blue-box curbside recycling programs that municipalities operate by giving control to Toronto-based Multi-Material B.C. on May 19.

Its role is to shift the responsibility and cost of recycling materials from municipal governments to producers.

Municipal governments already charge fees for curbside pickup and recycling programs.

Municipalities are unlikely to take those fees off your taxes when MMBC takes over and producers start paying.

In addition, most producers will have no choice but to pass on the cost of the extra MMBC fees they are paying to consumers.

"The slogan for MMBC should be 'Recycle once, but pay twice,'" said NDP small business critic Lana Popham.

Popham, the MLA for Saanich South, raised the MMBC issue in the legislature Monday and blasted the Liberal government.

"If government doesn't take a step back, B.C.'s recycling system is going to end up in a giant dumpster," she said.

"The control of recycling should never have been outsourced to the large corporate interests based in Ontario and abroad. This is a profound failure. This program needs to be paused and the entire concept reconsidered."

MMBC is technically a not-for-profit agency, but two of its directors are executives of grocery store chain Loblaw and multinational Unilever, which makes foods and personal care products under the Skippy, Knorr, Lipton, Slim-Fast, Ben & Jerry's, Dove and Ponds brands.

Popham's blast this week follows a coalition of businesses launching a Rethink it, B.C. campaign earlier this month to fight MMBC.

New B.C. recycling program should be trashed, say critics - Penticton Herald

Written by Special to The Herald
Wednesday, 26 March 2014 02:00 -

The group is made up of representatives from the printing, manufacturing, agriculture, landscaping, food, wholesale, retail, wholesale and recycling industries.

Rethink it, B.C. is demanding Premier Christy Clark not go ahead with MMBC.

You can let your voice be heard on Twitter #RethinkItBC.