



Results of Alberta Plastics Data Project Released

Resources produced include an industrial plastics audit guide

July 19, 2022 – The results are now available from the Alberta Plastics Data Project, a 2021 study on the generation of plastics within Alberta’s Industrial Heartland (AIH). The Alberta Plastics Recycling Association (APRA) received funding from the Federal Government to complete a study in the industrial area of AIH, an area northeast of Edmonton, consisting of five partnering municipalities.

The waste audit found that the annual tonnage of plastics disposed of from 25 companies across the AIH in 2021 was estimated to be approximately 390 tonnes, with garbage bags being the most prevalent plastic disposed. In addition to high density polyethylene (HDPE) and low density polyethylene film, other materials generated included laminated film and shrink wrap and HDPE containers.

The study, completed by Eunomia Research & Consulting Inc. and partners, found that post-use plastic is predominately generated from activities related to the industrial operations and administration departments within the companies studied. Many of the sites had materials delivered in returnable plastic packaging, which did not end up in the disposal stream. These returnable plastic packaging containers can be sent back to the supplier, or sent directly to a recycler, as they are a clean stream of recyclable plastics.

The volume of post-use plastic disposed from the 25 companies in this study is small compared to the total estimate of plastic disposed from the Industrial and Commercial (ICI) sector province wide. The ICI sector disposes of an estimated 313,000 tonnes of plastic annually¹. The post-use plastic disposed in the Heartland is therefore 0.12% of this total. Various factors impacted the study, including challenges with access to sites during the pandemic that eliminated the ability to audit a hospital and reduced access to some industrial sites.

In addition to the results, the project produced a plastic audit guide that can be used by other organizations and industrial sites to assess their plastic generation. Each participating company received a summary of the audit results, to inform each sites’ own awareness about plastic generated.

¹ https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2020/eccc/en14/En14-405-2020-eng.pdf



“This was the first of its kind study done in Alberta to try to measure the generation of industrial plastics. We will now use these results to assess opportunities and work to find solutions to manage the plastic,” commented APRA’s executive director, Tammy Schwass. “We are happy to be able to share the audit guide with other jurisdictions who may look to complete similar studies.”

This project was one of [14 selected from across Canada](#) to receive funding under the Zero Plastic Waste Initiative by Environment and Climate Change Canada. Partners who have made the project possible include the Recycling Council of Alberta (RCA), Alberta’s Industrial Heartland Association (AIHA), the Northeast Capital Industrial Association (NCIA), Dow, Inter Pipeline and the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT). These partners provided guidance on the project and in-kind or financial support.

“Our Government has a comprehensive approach to reduce plastic pollution and move toward its goal of zero plastic waste by 2030. This approach requires the support and active engagement of the provinces, territories, municipalities and the private sector. The results of this study are a welcome and valuable contribution to better understanding plastic waste in Canada, and will help in the transition to a circular economy that keeps plastic in the economy and out of the environment,” said the Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

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About the Alberta Plastics Recycling Association

APRA is in its 31st year as a not-for-profit association dedicated to the goals to advance plastic circularity and progress Alberta as a sustainable place to do business. APRA is a conduit of information in the diversion of plastics from landfill and makes introductions among stakeholders to build important relationships. Its membership consists of plastics resin producers, manufacturers, fabricators, converters, wholesalers and retailers of plastic products, along with plastics recyclers and other members of the recycling community. The organization has helped to establish plastics recycling initiatives in Alberta for materials including used oil containers, milk containers and expanded polystyrene (EPS) among others. The Association is committed to the establishment of an agricultural plastics program and increased capture of plastics materials without a designated recycling program. www.albertaplasticsrecycling.com

About the Zero Plastics Waste Initiative

The Zero Plastic Waste Initiative aims to effect change across the plastics lifecycle to increase waste collection, improve value recovery, and prevent and remove plastic pollution. It supports projects that use innovative approaches leading to measurable, positive impacts to reduce plastic waste and pollution in Canada. Projects must improve the understanding, mitigation or remediation of plastic waste and pollution in Canada. They must clearly demonstrate activities that are measurable and will contribute to the implementation of Canada's zero plastic waste vision. This includes our commitments under the Ocean Plastics Charter and Canada-wide Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste. <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-funding/programs/zero-plastic-waste-initiative.html>

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