



**Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee  
Report 63-19(2): Report on Bill 78: Waste Reduction and Resource Recovery Act**

Background

On March 29, 2023 Bill 78: Waste Reduction and Resource Recovery Act (Bill 78) received second reading and was referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment (Committee) for review. On June 1, 2023, Committee sought feedback from the public and held a public hearing in Yellowknife to review the bill with the previous Minister of Environment and Climate Change (ECC) and departmental staff present. On September 27, 2023, Committee tabled its report on Bill 78. When this report was tabled, there were less than 120 days of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly before dissolution.

In a letter dated February 26, 2024, Committee requested a response on the report before the end of the May-June 2024 sitting of the 20<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

Recommendation 1

Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends that the GNWT and the Department of Environment and Climate Change continue their efforts toward opening a second recycling facility in Yellowknife to improve access for residents and increase waste recovery. The Department should continue to explore new technology and methods towards waste reduction, diversion and recycling while creating local employment. Committee, therefore, further recommends that this second recycling facility be a staffed site with cash available to pay patrons.

*GNWT Response*

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) agrees with the recommendation.

The GNWT strives for continuous improvement of recycling services, and access to these services for all residents in the NWT. We are currently working to expand the types of materials accepted for recycling, including used oil, tires, and an expanded suite of electronic and electrical products and include them in regulations. In addition, we are working to update the Beverage Container Regulations and Electronics Recycling Regulations to align them with Bill 78 as the *Waste Reduction and Resource Recovery Act* is brought into force.

In our efforts to improve access for residents and increase waste recovery in Yellowknife, we are working to develop and pilot two unstaffed 24-hour automated 'Drop and Go' depots: one at a downtown location and one at the Yellowknife Bottle Depot. These sites would provide credit to client

bank accounts within a few days of bottles being deposited. ECC anticipates they will begin operating in spring 2025.

ECC plans to conduct temporary collection events once a week in downtown Yellowknife throughout the summer of 2024 to bridge the gap until the 'Drop and Go' depots are operational. These events will offer both immediate cash back or credits to user's accounts. This will help ECC to assess the demand, feasibility and viability for both types of services in the long term.

Additionally, ECC is pursuing discussions with downtown business owners and other non-profit agencies to locate a reverse vending machine that would accept limited types of containers and would dispense cash on site. This immediate cash back feature would likely better serve the underhoused population.

In closing, we are dedicated to achieving our goal of accessible recycling services across the NWT.