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MEDIA CONTACT: Nicole Kohnert, P.Eng., Manager Regional Engineering Services
PHONE/EMAIL: 250-550-3741 / nicole.kohnert@rdno.ca

Waste Management Industry Supports Draft Solid Waste Management Plan Update

The Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) has received support from the recycling and waste hauling industry in the Okanagan for the proposed long term vision for managing solid waste generated in the RDNO, as proposed in the draft Solid Waste Management Plan Update (SWMP Update). Meetings held on March 15th with management representatives from Cascades Recovery +, Waste Management, Tip-It Waste Solutions, Waste Connections, and Interior Recycling helped RDNO staff and consultants better understand the needs of industry. Support from the people that move the material to and from various facilities and markets goes a long way toward achieving increased waste diversion from landfills and improving the quality of materials that are currently recycled in the North Okanagan. “The recycling/recovery industry is supportive of any initiative that improves the quality of properly separated materials, and makes it possible to sell high quality recyclable material into local and overseas markets, and we are committed to keeping our customers involved and informed as the market situation develops”, stated Steve Fast, Sustainable Materials Management, Cascades Recovery +.

With the current unsteady packaging and printed paper markets in North America and overseas, and ever-changing economic realities, it has been crucial to maintain good communication with all of the participants in the recycling industry.

Jay Aarsen, Owner and Operator of Interior Recycling, stated that “sustainability and a circular economy are worthy goals. Having worked with the RDNO for more than twenty-five years we have watched the management of solid waste in the region evolve from waste being called ‘garbage’ to now being thought of as a ‘resource’. We welcome a strategy that promotes continually increasing the diversion of reusable and recyclable materials from disposal”.

Dodie Pritchard, Route Manager with Waste Management, Geoff Goodman, District Sales Manager with Waste Connections, and Kendall Johnson, Owner of Tip-It Waste Solutions spoke of how much easier it would be to divert recyclable materials from the waste stream if the RDNO could provide ongoing technical assistance and outreach to their customers on a one-to-one basis, especially given the evolving recycling markets and increased importance in reducing contamination. They wholeheartedly supported the draft SWMP Update recommendations around increased education and system improvements to foster lasting behaviour change, and noted the value of partnering with new dedicated staff to carry out these activities.

The RDNO will continue to meet with municipal and industry stakeholders over the next six weeks to get feedback on the proposed SWMP Update and to review how a target of

350 kg/capita/year can be accomplished over the next ten years. Reducing disposal from the current 500 kg/capita/year will require new programs and policies to be implemented. This 30% reduction in the amount of waste going to landfill will only be possible if all sectors that make up the RDNO solid waste management system participate in the changes that are needed. With 60% of the existing disposed waste stream recyclable or compostable, there is good potential available to divert materials from landfill.

The following are currently available for public participation:

- Open House – Wednesday, April 11 at the Vernon Library - 3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
- Access to technical memoranda and the draft plan at www.rdno.ca/swmp
- Send your comments or feedback on the draft plan to communityservices@rdno.ca