

Would You Pay More to Guarantee Your Stuff Is Recycled?

**Earth911.com, by [Lori Brown](#) -
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Stewardship Ontario has recently started a program called Orange Drop whereby retailers can participate in recycling programs for some of the goods they sell.

Shoppers in Ontario, Canada might be surprised to find the item “Eco Fee” suddenly listed at the bottom of their retail receipts, a new reality that became effective July 1.

The fees coincide with Stewardship Ontario’s July 1 launch of the “Orange Drop” program, North America’s first jurisdiction to launch a single program for the management of 22 types of household materials requiring special handling when they become waste.

This Municipal Hazardous and Special Waste (MHSW) program manages paint, pharmaceuticals, petroleum products, batteries, fertilizers, pesticides and fluorescent lights, among others.

The first phase of this program launched in July 2008 with nine material categories including paint, pesticides, antifreeze and other automotive products. In 2009, that program diverted approximately 16.6 million pounds of paint and coatings, 16.9 million pounds of oil filters and 880,000 pounds of batteries from landfills and waterways, to list a few.

The July 1 launch expands the [Orange Drop](#) program into a new phase, adding 13 additional material categories, estimated to divert approximately 59.5 million pounds from landfills and waterways each year.

Stewardship Ontario, the government-regulated group set up to oversee mandated Ontario recycling programs, insists this program is not a “tax grab” but merely a fee that retailers can opt to pass on to their customers, or absorb themselves.

“Orange Drop is designed to raise awareness about what is considered a hazardous or special waste and to encourage Ontarians to make returning these items part of their regular recycling routine,” said Lyle Clarke, Vice President of Operations for Stewardship Ontario.

The fees are levied to “stewards,” the companies that make or distribute the products able to be recovered through the Orange Drop program. Stewards pay a fee based on the

amount of materials put in to the marketplace. These [fees range from](#) one cent per liter for “liquid cough medication” pharmaceuticals to \$6.66 per “large fire extinguisher.” How the stewards choose to manage their fees is outside the authority of Stewardship Ontario. They may choose to absorb the cost of their fees, pass it along to their product’s sticker price or make the cost transparent by itemizing it on the cash register receipt.

According to Stewardship Ontario, every cent received from stewards is used to pay for a program to keep hazardous products out of landfills and waterways, leading us to pose the question: Would you pay more to fund the collection and recycling of the hazardous products you purchased and used?