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Speaking Notes to the City of Toronto Public Works & Infrastructure Committee

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I appreciate the opportunity to speak here today. My name is Sarah Mills, I am the Manager of Special Projects for the Recycling Council of Ontario. Jo-Anne St. Godard, my organizations Executive Director sends her regrets and she is out of the country and unable to attend today.

As many of you may not be familiar with the Recycling Council of Ontario, I would just like to provide a brief overview of what our organization is about. The RCO is a membership-based non-government, non-profit organization whose sole focus is waste management and the 3Rs hierarchy. Our broad-based membership is comprised of a diverse group of organizations and individuals from product manufacturers to waste haulers to governments to individuals, academics and other not-for-profits. We were very instrumental in the creation of the first blue box program and have been heavily involved in waste reduction and product stewardship for more than 30 years and currently our Executive Director sits on the Board of Waste Diversion Ontario.

The purpose of the KPMG report is to identify opportunities for potential budget savings for the 2012 budget and review user fees and service efficiencies. Unfortunately two months is woefully insufficient time to do a review and analysis of this magnitude and this committee should delay any decision making based on this report until significantly more research is done.

Based on our review of the report, the waste management service reductions suggested by the report will have minimal or no budgetary savings benefits as these services are paid for primarily or entirely through user and/or stewardship fees.

In reference to the review of services, The conclusion from KPMG's review of services is that waste management services should be reduced however, the purpose of the service review should have been to ensure that service efficiencies are being maximized so areas that are below standard should be improved to at least meet standard levels instead the report it suggested ways to lower service standards.

1. If the City is making decisions based on financial savings or reductions alone, it is critical that they complete a full cost accounting (short and long term) on the costs of disposal versus recycling.
 - Green Lane Landfill's existing permitted capacity will be exhausted by approximately 2025 based on current waste diversion initiatives. Toronto's current plan to expand diversion programs to meet a target of 70% diversion would increase the site's life expectancy to approximately 2033. Reducing the target will force this landfill to reach capacity years earlier. And if that is the case Toronto should immediately begin the landfill siting process which can take years, and is difficult, expensive and unpopular

2. A move backwards to increasing landfilling will also result in a loss of jobs. There are 7 recycling jobs for every 1 tonne of materials recycled versus 1 job for every tonne material landfilled, rather than retracting its diversion commitments Toronto should actually invest in more recycling to help drive job creation. The city should work to ensure that these diversion jobs are located in and around Toronto.
3. The city has played an important role driving EPR in Ontario which has resulted in millions of dollars of 'new' money from industry to support diversion for program like the blue box. The city would be wiser to continue to work with the Province to further EPR beyond the blue box, e-waste and, hazardous waste to bring in more dollars to support the recycling system. It should be noted that the province has set a minimum target of 60%, the City has not yet achieved this target so any reductions in service would move the City further away from this provincial minimum diversion target.
4. In relation to my previous point, at present only half of Toronto's Blue Box program is paid for by industry, the city should be working to get the province to mandate industry to pay 100% of Toronto's blue box program.
5. In addition to getting the blue box to be 100% paid for by industry, the City of Toronto should further advocate to expand industry's diversion responsibilities to include investments in recycling in opens spaces (parks and streets) and litter. At the moment these are 100% paid for by the city and are a significant cost. EPR can be expanded to include support for more recycling in businesses.

Before I close I want to reiterate, there is a cost to disposal that is higher than what has been suggested by the KPMG report and the City is should make sure that it fully understands the full depths of those costs before making any decisions. And please remember that recycling can drive investments to support more jobs for Torontonians.

Thank you.