

Regional District of Nanaimo Board – Meeting Date: July 14, 2026

This document contains closed ‘in-camera’ meeting decisions that have been released because they are no longer considered sensitive.

Recycle BC Contamination Reduction Order – Update

At the July 14, 2026 in camera Board meeting, the Board voted to rise and report on the “Recycle BC Contamination Reduction Order – Update” report once it was received for information.

Released: July 16, 2026



RECYCLE BC CONTAMINATION REDUCTION ORDER – UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

That the Recycle BC Contamination Reduction Order – Update report be received for information.

BACKGROUND

In early 2026, Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Curbside Collection was advised by Recycle BC that the region's recycling contamination rate exceeded acceptable thresholds for a sustained period in 2025. As a result, the service was required to develop and implement a Contamination Reduction Plan (CRP).

The CRP has since been approved by Recycle BC, and staff are actively working to reduce contamination in the curbside recycling stream. These measures include enhanced curbside audits between May and September 2026, cart tagging for non-compliant materials, targeted education for affected households, and enforcement for repeatedly non-compliant households.

On June 22, 2026, the RDN received the Q1 2026 Recycle BC Audit Report. The report identified a significant increase in contamination, rising from 5.4% in Q4 2025 to 18.2% in Q1 2026. This increase is largely attributable to a limited number of loads with significantly elevated levels of metal and other heavier unacceptable materials.

This result further reinforces the need for sustained corrective action and places the RDN at heightened risk of continued non-compliance with Recycle BC's contamination requirements.

While the efforts to date have resulted in improved compliance by many households, as evident from the most recent audit a subset of households continue to place non-recyclable materials in recycling carts. To address ongoing non-compliance, Curbside Collection staff, in collaboration with RDN Bylaw Services, have established a graduated enforcement process.

The following process will be applied to repeat offending households:

- **First offence:** Cart tag identifying non-compliant materials found in the recycling cart
- **Second offence:** Cart tag and formal written notice outlining required corrective actions and potential consequences
- **Third offence:** Final written warning indicating that further non-compliance will result in enforcement measures
- **Subsequent offences:** Enforcement, including a penalty of \$500 per occurrence and potential suspension of curbside recycling services, if undesirable behavior continues.

This approach is intended to balance education with enforcement, support behavior change, and ensure compliance with program requirements and Recycle BC contractual obligations.

Staff are also preparing a coordinated communications approach, including a news release, to reinforce proper recycling practices and support contamination reduction across the region.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications associated with this report.

However, if contamination levels remain above allowable thresholds, the RDN may be subject to financial penalties from Recycle BC. Staff estimate these penalties could be approximately \$120,000 per year (\$10,000/mo.), beginning as early as Q1 2027.

Should elevated contamination persist, staff will bring forward options for Board consideration, including potential adjustments to the Curbside Utility Fee and additional investments in contamination reduction measures.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

Planning and Managing for Growth - Understand and develop an inter-connected framework of strategies and plans to manage growth to support complete communities, including planning, transportation, infrastructure, and fiscal sustainability.

ATTACHMENT

Select Recycle BC Audit Photos – 2025 to 2026

REVIEWED BY:

- M. Walters, General Manager, Regional and Community Utilities
- D. Holmes, Chief Administrative Officer

RISE AND REPORT – MEMBER MUNICIPALITIES IN CAMERA

Under the provisions of section I(2) and I(3) of the Board Code of Conduct Policy A1-37, Directors or Alternate Directors may disclose in camera information that is not marked “Confidential” to their respective Councils if disclosure is made for the purposes of obtaining a Council response to a Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) proposal or undertaking, or informing a Council of an RDN proposal or undertaking. For those purposes, and only those purposes, Directors or Alternate Directors may also permit the disclosure of in camera meeting materials and information that is not marked “Confidential” to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of the member municipality and the CAO’s direct reports on the understanding no broader disclosure to third persons of such in camera meeting materials will be made.

RISE AND REPORT – PUBLIC

Staff recommend rising and reporting on this report, once it is received for information.

Select Recycle B.C. Audit Photos:2025 - 2026

Photo Descriptions:

Bottom Row (L-R): Small propane canisters, hypodermic needle, various textiles, scrap metal.

Middle Row (L-R): Unsortable materials, construction waste, metal containers/trays, hygienic products

Top Row (L-R): Scrap metal, commingled glass.

