Board of Directors Meeting Highlights
Held virtually via Zoom
BRA MRF Board Room
October 17, 2024 at 8:30 AM

Bluewater Recycling Association's New President A Familiar Face

Michelle Courtney, the Bluewater Recycling Association's (BRA) current controller, has been appointed president, effective Nov. 4, 2024.

"I am honoured to be appointed BRA's next president and I am excited to lead a team of talented and committed colleagues. I look forward to working closely with staff, the members, and all our stakeholders as we enter a critical phase of Ontario's circular economy journey. This journey includes the ongoing transition of Ontario's iconic Blue Box Program, as well as delivery of high quality solid waste management services for the member's waste diversion programs," Courtney wrote in the letter.

According to the letter, Courtney joined BRA as controller in 2016, joining the founding executive team and providing critical financial and strategic advice as the organization was growing and as BRA's automated collection program was being established.

She replaces Francis Veilleux, BRA's current and founding president, who has served in that role for the past 35 years. The letter states Veilleux will remain in place until the appointment becomes effective to ensure a smooth transition in leadership. His role will then become more advisory in nature until the end of the year.

"I have been blessed with such a team of professionals serving the members of the association" Veilleux wrote in the letter. "The experience has been most rewarding, and I am truly satisfied with our accomplishments together locally and in the industry. The association's solid team combined with a great foundation makes it poised to pursue the many opportunities ahead. As such, I believe it is the perfect time for me to step aside and let a new leader chart the course ahead. While too young to say I'm retiring, I expect to shift to a more casual schedule and share my special skill set to help others, where needed. Personally, I look especially forward to refocusing my time with my family that has been most supportive all these years."

The Bluewater Recycling Association was established in 1989 to promote, foster and apply the concept of environmentally conscious resource management within the membership, recognizing that municipal organizations are important contributors to the provision of environmental programs and services that better society's quality of life. It has promoted the reduction, reuse, recycling, and recovery of "waste" generated in Ontario educated and encouraged institutions, industries, businesses and individuals in the community to develop efficient methods of resource management.

2025 Budget

Effective April 1, all our members transitioned to the new full producer responsibility model where producers are 100% responsible for the operation and finance of the residential blue box program.

In 2025, the Association will no longer publish a share price as all our services are now contract based. The contractually based operations depend on the Ontario September CPI rate as published by Statistic Canada in October of every year to adjust service pricing. The September CPI came in at 1.9% in September of 2024. Our final budget will be set to reflect the change.

The last two years we experienced rapidly increasing interest rates that grew beyond our forecast. The results were a continued tight supply chain commanding higher prices for goods and capital investments. Our commodities prices recovered in 2024 and fuel prices that traditionally followed the same trend as our commodities have instead headed in the opposite direction with lower prices. Finally, the inflationary pressures drove wage increases to maintain staff and attract new people to replace our aging workforce.

After two years of deficits, the new operational and financial arrangements will be yielding a surplus that will be taking care of recent loses and enable the Association to continue its capital investments into new equipment that was delayed because of COVID.

Amendments To Four Producer Responsibility Regulations

It is important to underline at the outset that Ontario municipal governments are supportive of the outcomes-based approach taken under the RRCEA along with the provision for a strong oversight body. We also understand that this approach is new and it is important that we get these provisions right so these types of amendments are important.

We do have concerns that in each round of amendments to date including those that were made before the regulations were passed have reduced the outcomes sought (e.g., lower targets, more deductions and exemption) and weakened oversight. This runs counter to the province's ambitious targets to meet a 50% waste diversion target by 2030. As noted in the latest report by AMO entitled 2023 Ontario Baseline Waste & Recycling Report, the province needs to divert an additional 2.5 million tonnes of waste to meet its 2030 waste diversion and based on current activities has no way to achieve this target.

We are also hearing regularly from producers who expect major changes to the Blue Box regulation that will be proposed. These changes include significantly cutting some of the recycling targets like beverage containers and the removal of all public space requirements. We certainly hope this will be the case.

Finally, as many of the proposed amendments are vague and lack analysis to understand the impacts, we recommend that the detailed regulations be posted for comment before finalizing.

Right to Repair Consultation

The federal government has a goal of developing a repairability policy or approach for home appliances and consumer electronics. As municipalities are often responsible for managing the collection, recycling, and disposal of waste, we support the federal government's work on this matter.

In 2021, Ontario's Auditor General summarized the province's waste problem plainly: "The lack of government action on reducing business and industrial waste means that Ontario will be faced with questions about where to put all this waste and how to pay for it in the very near future." Indeed, estimates are that Ontario has less than 10 years left of existing landfill capacity.

Since 2017, Ontario has experienced an increase in the number of waste material diverted. Simultaneously, the overall volumes of both waste generated and waste disposed have also increased. Waste diversion volume increases have been led by greater municipal government investments in organic waste diversion programs while the diversion rates for other waste categories still needs improvement.

This is why municipal government have been advocating for additional action such as designating more materials under producer responsibility policies (e.g., more electronics and hazardous products, mattresses, carpets, clothing and other textiles, furniture and other bulky items).

From 2002-2022, although there was a 124% increase in the amount of residential organic waste composted, the amount of other residential materials recycled by weight decreased by 19%. In total, Ontario is diverting an estimated 25% - 30% of all waste generated.

A key concern is that even though more materials are being diverted from landfill, so too are the amount of materials being sent to disposal. There needs to be a greater emphasis on policies that can reduce the amount of waste being generated in the first place. This is why we are supportive of a federal repairability policy that could significantly assist in reducing the amount of waste that needs to be managed on an annual basis.

Home appliance and consumer electronics are a helpful starting point given the growth of e-waste and ongoing issues associated with fires caused by embedded batteries at waste and recycling facilities. A recent University of Waterloo study found that e-waste has tripled across the country in the last two decades. There are increasing concerns from residences about planned obsolescence. The federal government may want to consider opportunities to align the scope of products captured to home appliances and consumer electronics already caught in provincial Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policies (i.e., capturing the widest scope for inclusion) and as part of a longer-term strategy consider developing a list of future targeted products.

Regarding repair initiatives, several Ontario municipalities have implemented repair sessions or cafés. For instance, Peel Region has established an online "Share, Reuse, Repair Hub," providing resources to facilitate sharing, reusing, and repairing items. Similarly, York Region hosts Repair Cafés in community spaces through collaborating with NewMakeIt. These cafés typically utilize volunteers skilled in repairing electronics, small appliances, household items, and textiles. While

such efforts encourage consumers to reconsider their consumption and disposal habits for small appliances and electronics, the impact of these localized initiatives is limited. Municipally supported repair sessions are:

1) often highly dependent on volunteers,

2) require individual repair skill sets that are being lost in society overall, and

3) may be undermined by the increasing lack of repairability (by design) of certain manufactured items.

It is unlikely that a reliance on these diversion efforts, which are often dependent on charities, volunteers, and non-profit organizations, can adequately address with electronic and appliance waste in the long-term. Furthermore, this approach does not address industrial, commercial and institutional waste.

As this consultation states, "Repairability is a shared responsibility in Canada given provincial and territorial responsibility for consumer protection legislation". We strongly agree that the federal government has an important role to play to drive change in this area. The policy approach should clearly establish the roles and responsibilities of the entities along the value chain. Local governments would be pleased to share their experiences in fostering behavioural change in their communities related to repair.

We would also encourage the federal government to align its repairability efforts with other waste-related efforts. Repairability policies are important to expand the life of products, reduce consumer costs, and improve environmental outcomes. However, they need to be paired with end-of-life management policies that ensure the better management of resources. This includes policies related to end-of-life management of materials like producer responsibility, data capture, mandatory recycled content mandates, disposal bans, disposal levies, and source separation requirements. The federal government should play a greater role in aligning these policies across Canada to achieve better outcomes, such as increasing the scope of appliances and consumer electronics captured under producer responsibility policies.

The Association agrees with the fundamental principle of the right to repair and building things to last. It is aware of the Right-to-Repair Directive in the European Union which will require manufacturers or sellers to repair products under warranty. We are also aware that other governments around the world are taking action to address the issue of repairability (or lack thereof).

The Association supports the federal government's efforts to address this issue - whether that be by ensuring access to spare parts or warranties, dealing with the high cost of repair, the use of intellectual property protection to hinder repair, or planned obsolescence.

The Association recognizes that there are many approaches to the issue of repairability, and we hope that the federal government's choices can complement and work in synergy with provincial legislation and regulations as well as with local government's efforts in this area.

New Greenwashing Provisions

New provisions added to the Competition Act explicitly target greenwashing. As municipalities are often responsible for managing the collection, recycling, and disposal of waste, we are often called to deal with the potential impacts of products or packaging that are labelled incorrectly and, as a result, improperly disposed of at their end-of-life. Examples include items that might be inappropriately labelled in a way that implies that they can be recycled, composted or flushed when municipal systems cannot handle them. Local governments incur the direct costs to manage these materials, and in the case of many products that are labelled as flushable and/or compostable, these products can damage municipal infrastructure.

The Competition Bureau has posed specific questions about environmental benefit claims. These questions focus on claims that are commonly made but are less likely to be based on adequate and proper testing. From municipal experience, we can state that claims about compostability and flushability are two of the most frequent environmental assertions. Testing and certification for compostability does not guarantee an item will compost adequately under municipal or backyard composting system conditions. Compostability testing takes place under ideal temperature and retention times and is not representative of the compost system used by most municipalities. It is also important to note that many municipalities do not provide food waste composting for residents. Additionally, compostability testing does not evaluate the material in anaerobic digestion systems that are becoming more commonly used for municipal organic processing.

We are not aware of any third-party certification standards to evaluate items labelled as flushable. Guidelines developed by manufacturers are not adequate to protect public infrastructure and cost Canadian utilities millions of dollars annually. It should be prohibited to label a product other than toilet paper flushable until a third-party standard is developed and widely available.

Consideration should also be given to challenges with products claiming “chemical free” formulations that often contain traces of manufacturing substances. While these may be undetectable in low concentrations, they accumulate in municipal processing facilities such as wastewater collection and treatment facilities and can harm environmental and human health. Many substances also remain unregulated due to insufficient scientific research in determining their potential harm. A prime example is PFAS (a class of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances). In such cases, precautionary principles should be applied before making any environmental claims.

Given the global supply chain and the many consumer products utilized, there could be efficiency in adopting similar standards/timelines as other jurisdictions. The policy conversation about appropriate labelling and environmental claims is occurring across the globe. We note that the UK will require mandatory “recycle” or “do not recycle” labelling by March 31, 2026 for most packaging types and by March 31, 2027 for plastic films and flexibles. Both the UK and Australia seem to have made large in-roads into improving information available to consumers through the On-Pack Recycling Label and the Australasian Recycling Label.

These standards should however consider national and provincial conditions to ensure the materials can be properly managed through recycling, compost or wastewater collection and treatment facilities. Where no standards exist that can verify claims, labels should not be used.

Airlines Can Now Recycle From International Flights To The U.S.

Through the new program, it's estimated that incoming passengers will generate over 67 million pounds of recyclables on international flights

Historically, recycling has not been permitted on international flights into the U.S., as the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has mandated the incineration or sterilization of all regulated garbage waste upon arrival.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is now participating in a new program enabling airlines to recycle single-use aluminum, paper, and plastic products used during international flights arriving in the United States. This aligns with CBP's Green Trade Strategy, which governs the agency's efforts to "advance environmental sustainability, climate resilience, and green innovation".

This new program will allow international airlines to recycle once appropriate safeguarding measures have been implemented, protecting American agriculture against foreign pests and pathogens while promoting the sustainability of the airline industry.

In addition to its ongoing mission of securing the nation's borders, CBP, in partnership with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA), will work with airlines and port authorities at U.S. international airports to set up local policy and procedures for recycling single-use products based on the resources available within each airport's environment.

APHIS and CBP will evaluate and approve airlines prior to granting permission to recycle on their international aircraft. The two agencies jointly regulate and enforce the handling of catering waste on foreign-origin aircraft as part of the Regulated Garbage program.

The new recycling program provides benefits ranging from resource conservation to energy savings. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), recycling just 10 plastic bottles saves enough energy to power a laptop for more than 25 hours.

With over 120 million international passengers arriving in the United States annually, it is estimated that incoming passengers will generate over 67 million pounds of recyclables on international flights. This collaboration will lead to a reduction in the amount of material requiring incineration or sterilization, thereby lowering energy consumption and further contributing to sustainable practices in international aviation.

Terracycle Provides Convenient Solution For Recycling Halloween Candy Wrappers

Zero Waste Boxes help keep flexible plastic-based candy wrappers out of landfill

Flexible plastic-based candy packaging and wrappers are not typically recycled through curbside recycling services.

After the Halloween costumes come off and the sugar highs come down, there's a frightening amount of non-recyclable waste left over, according to Canadian recycling industry data. Most candy wrappers are tricky to recycle because they are made from a mix of materials, including polypropylene, aluminum foil, and paper. So when the parties are over and trick or treating is done, piles of candy wrappers end up in the trash.

TerraCycle's Zero Waste Box provides a convenient recycling solution for all brands of flexible plastic-based candy packaging and wrappers, which are not typically recycled through curbside recycling services.

In North America, TerraCycle has recycled nearly 20 million candy wrappers and snack packaging through our Zero Waste Boxes to date.

When placed in public spaces such as schools, community centres, local businesses, and neighborhood parks, Candy and Snack Wrappers Zero Waste Boxes encourage people to responsibly dispose of their wrappers instead of tossing items on the ground.

And for a special Halloween treat, TerraCycle created spooky versions of the Halloween Treat Wrappers Zero Waste Box and Halloween Treat Wrappers Zero Waste Pouch, available for a limited time only.

When full, the boxes and pouches can be returned to TerraCycle for processing. The collected waste will be cleaned, melted, and recycled into pellets that can be used to make new products.

TerraCycle specializes in recycling complex waste streams and created Zero Waste Boxes for hard-to-recycle waste that isn't typically recycled through local services.

AG Bonta Sues ExxonMobil for Deceiving the Public on Recyclability of Plastic Products

The first-of-its-kind lawsuit seeks to hold one of the largest petrochemical companies in the world accountable for misleading the public on plastic's recyclability and polluting California's environment and communities

California Attorney General Rob Bonta announced the filing of a lawsuit against ExxonMobil for allegedly engaging in a decades-long campaign of deception that caused and exacerbated the global plastics pollution crisis. In a complaint filed in the San Francisco County Superior Court, the Department of Justice alleges that ExxonMobil has been deceiving Californians for half a century through misleading public statements and slick marketing promising that recycling would address the ever-increasing amount of plastic waste ExxonMobil produces. Through this lawsuit, the Attorney General seeks to compel ExxonMobil, which promotes and produces the largest amount of polymers—essentially the building blocks used to make single-use plastic—that become plastic waste in California, to end its deceptive practices that threaten the environment and the public. Attorney General Bonta also seeks to secure an abatement fund, disgorgement, and civil penalties for the harm inflicted by plastics pollution upon California's communities and the environment.

ExxonMobil is the world's largest producer of polymers used to make single-use plastics. These materials are produced by ExxonMobil from fossil fuels and are then molded (by other companies) into single-use plastic. For decades, ExxonMobil, one of the most powerful companies in the world, falsely promoted all plastic as recyclable, when in fact the vast majority of plastic products are not and likely cannot be recycled, either technically or economically. This caused consumers to purchase and use more single-use plastic than they otherwise would have due to the company's misleading public statements and advertising. For instance, through a trade group launched to promote recycling as an alternative to reducing plastics consumption, ExxonMobil placed a 12-page editorial-style advertisement in a July 1989 edition of Time magazine titled "The URGENT NEED TO RECYCLE." This "advertorial" highlighted recycling as a smart solution for plastic waste and efforts to further recycling and recycling technology. Since 1970, ExxonMobil, through this trade association, also adapted and promoted the chasing arrows symbol for plastics. This symbol is now strongly associated with recycling and consumers are led to believe that items with the symbol can and will be recycled when placed in the recycling stream. In reality, only about 5 percent of U.S. plastic waste is recycled, and the recycling rate has never exceeded 9 percent.

More recently, ExxonMobil continues to deceive the public by touting "advanced recycling" as the solution to the plastic waste and pollution crisis. "Advanced recycling" (also known as "chemical recycling") is an umbrella term used by the plastics industry to describe a variety of heat or solvent-based technologies that can theoretically convert certain types of plastic waste into petrochemical feedstock, which can be used to make new plastic. Under its "advanced recycling" program, ExxonMobil uses heat to break down plastic waste. ExxonMobil promotes its "advanced recycling" program as a breakthrough in technology that will make plastics sustainable but hides important truths about its technical limitations, including that:

- The vast majority—92 percent—of plastic waste processed through ExxonMobil's "advanced recycling" technology does not become recycled plastic, but rather primarily fuels,

- The plastics that are produced through ExxonMobil's "advanced recycling" process contain so little plastic waste that they are effectively virgin plastics deceptively marketed as "circular" (co-opting a term typically understood as a full circle of sustainable reuse, where waste becomes raw material) and sold at a premium,
- ExxonMobil's "advanced recycling" process cannot handle large amounts of post-consumer plastic waste such as potato chip bags without risking the safety and performance of its equipment,
- Plastics produced through ExxonMobil's "advanced recycling" program, in ExxonMobil's best case scenario, will only account for less than one percent of ExxonMobil's total virgin plastic production capacity, which continues to grow.

ExxonMobil's "advanced recycling" program is nothing more than a public relations stunt meant to encourage the public to keep purchasing single-use plastics that are fueling the plastics pollution crisis.

ExxonMobil produces the largest amount of single-use plastic that becomes plastic waste. Since 1985, more than 26 million pounds of trash has been collected from California beaches and waterways, approximately 81 percent of which is plastic. Most of the plastic items collected on the annual California Coastal Cleanup Day can be traced to ExxonMobil's polymer resins.

Threats Posed by Plastic to the Environment and California Communities

The global plastics waste and pollution crisis has been driven by the fossil fuel and petrochemical industries. Around the world each year, an estimated 12.1 million tons of plastic waste become aquatic pollution, and 19.8 million tons are polluted to land. Together, that is the equivalent of 4 garbage trucks of plastic waste polluted in the water or land every minute.

Single-use plastics—plastic packaging, bags, straws, disposable plasticware and utensils, and other products that are typically used once, then disposed—comprise most of the plastic waste that escapes into the environment. Plastic does not biodegrade, instead breaking down into smaller pieces called microplastics. Microplastics have been found in drinking water, food, and even the air people breathe. More recently, microplastics have been found inside the human body: in our lungs, blood, and in breast milk. Through its deception, ExxonMobil has caused or substantially contributed to plastic pollution that has harmed and continues to harm California's environment, wildlife, and natural resources.

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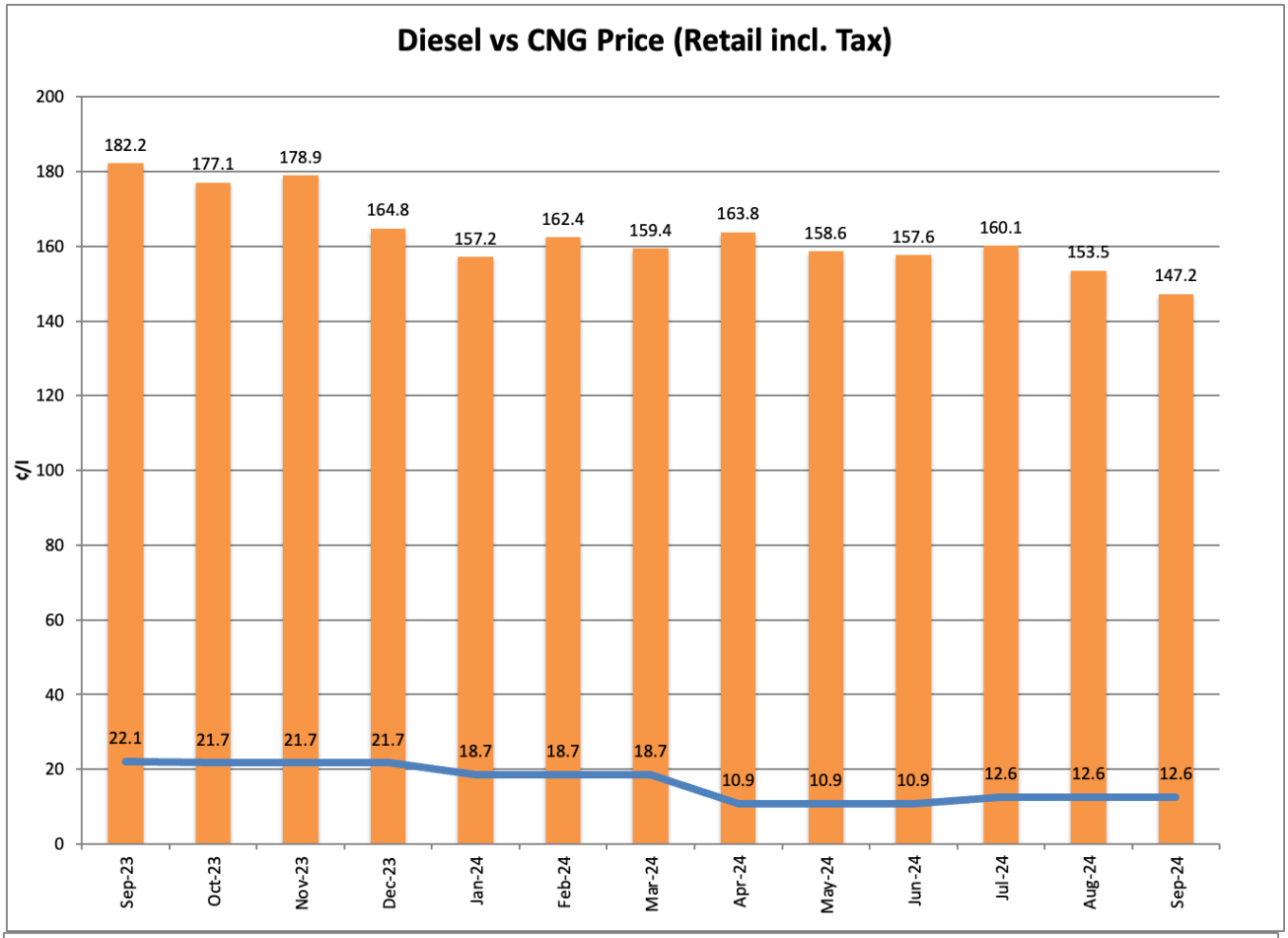
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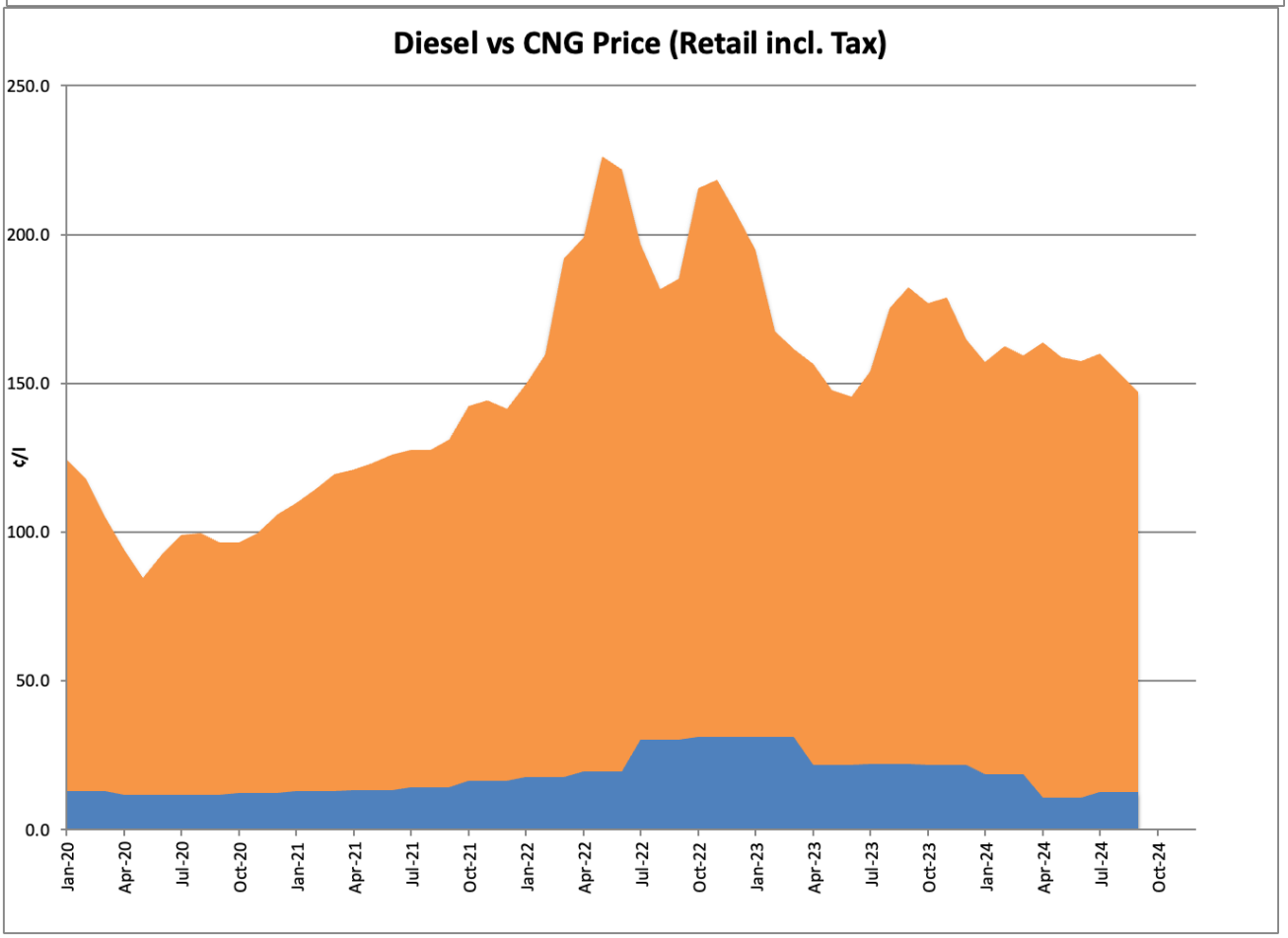
Diesel vs CNG Price (Retail incl. Tax)
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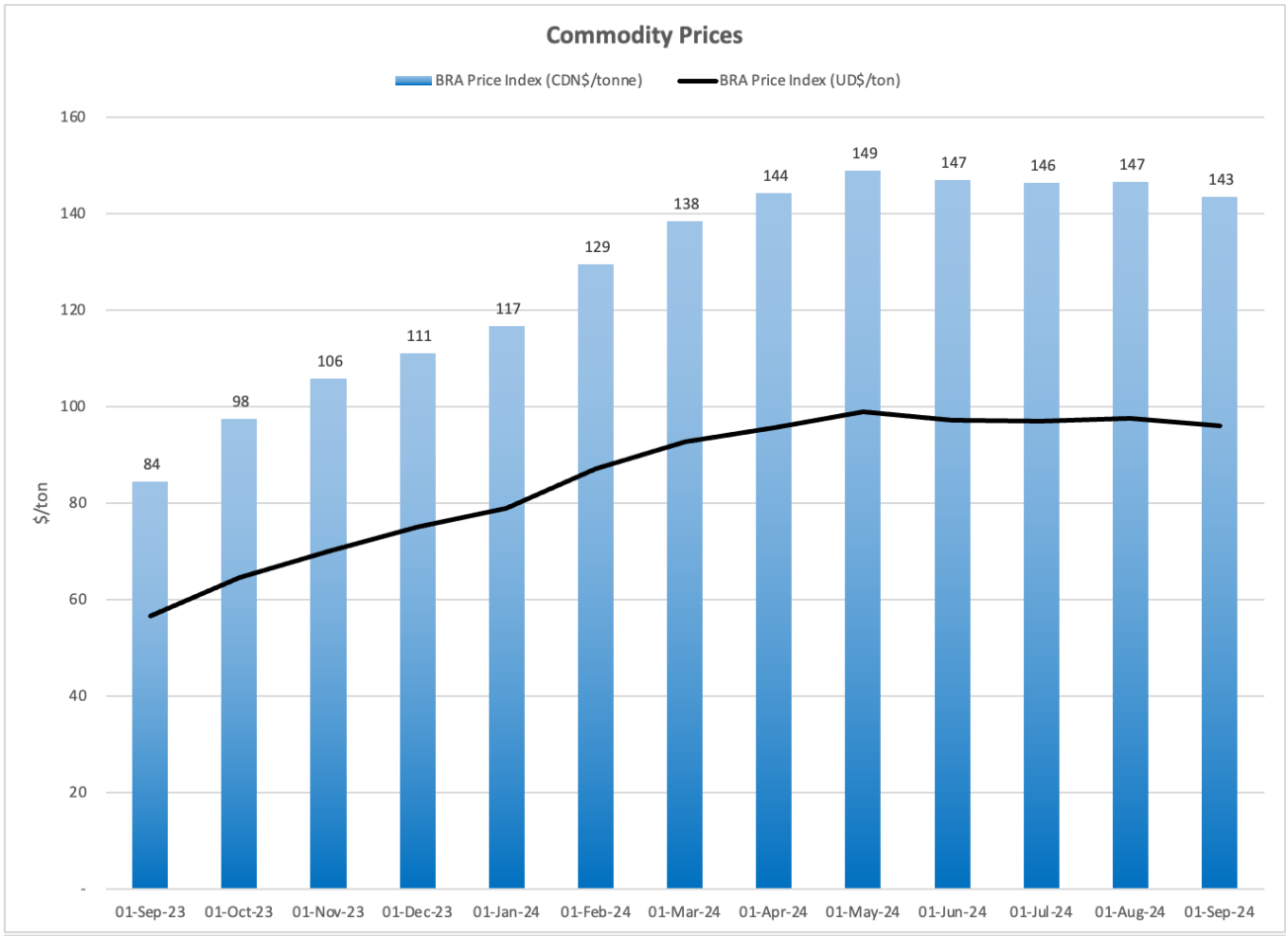
Commodity Prices
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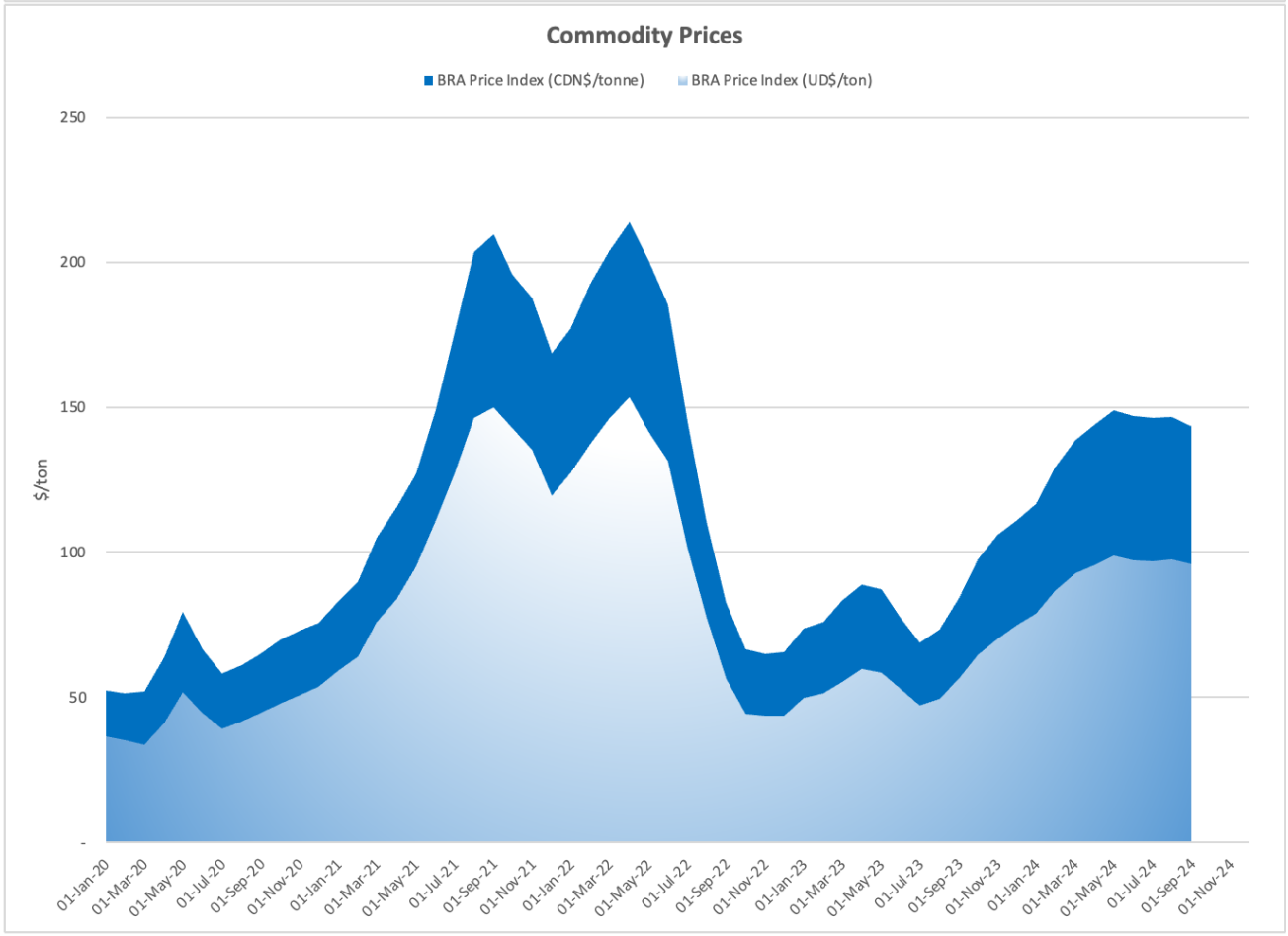
Commodity Prices
BRA Price Index (CDN$/tonne)
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