

June 2, 2010

MMSB Announces Funding for Ever Green

A new research and development project in St. John's aimed at enabling recovery and reuse of wine bottles has received support from the Multi-Material Stewardship Board's (MMSB) Solid Waste Management Innovation Fund, and from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), Government of Canada. A review of the North American recycling sector, in association with the National Research Council, has confirmed that this is the first project of its kind in North America.

Through the development of an industrial-level system for recovery, de-labelling and sanitization of wine bottles, Ever Green Environmental Corporation will provide 500,000 wine bottles annually for use by Newfoundland-based wineries and will target annual reductions of approximately 2,500 metric tonnes of greenhouse gases (GHGs).

"This investment through ACOA is a win-win on several fronts," said the Honourable Keith Ashfield, Minister of National Revenue, Minister of ACOA and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway. "It will help Ever Green Environmental achieve significant economic benefits, it will help create jobs, and it will benefit the environment through the recycling of old wine bottles. Our Government is committed to making strategic and intelligent investments such as this to diversify and strengthen the economy."

"The reuse of recyclable materials is key to our environmental future, and we are pleased to support Ever Green Environmental in this initiative," said the Honourable Charlene Johnson, Minister of Environment and Conservation. "By enabling a continuous reuse of recoverable wine bottles, we will realize significant environmental savings in the manufacture, transportation and reprocessing of glass materials."

The challenge of large volume recycling and reuse lies with the wide variety of shapes, sizes and dimensions of such containers, and the variety of label materials and methods of label adherence. In the spirits and wine industries, size, shape, glass color and label material and adherence have all formed fundamental aspects of the "brand" and therefore significant variances exist.

Ever Green Board Chair Ed Drover explained "processes for recovery and reuse of glass alcohol containers are well defined and established, as is de-labelling for small volumes of containers. We now have a process that can address sanitization, de-labelling, recovery and reuse of hundreds of thousands of containers annually in a single integrated industrial process."

The environmental opportunity represented by this project is significant. Currently, almost 2,500,000 bottles are imported into the province annually by the Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation, private companies and wineries. These bottles are generally sourced from Europe, flown by air cargo to Montreal, and transported by truck to St. John's and redistributed to the local operators for filling. The life cycle for these bottles is currently a one-time use, after which they are crushed and the material shipped out of province for recycling.

"Our initial focus should be on the local wine industry which accounts for import and one-time use of some 500,000 bottles annually," said Ever Green President Mike Wadden. "The wineries have recognized that they must incorporate recycled bottles to support their own sustainability. We have been working with the Industrial Outreach Group of the Faculty of Engineering & Applied Science, Memorial University, to develop an industrial-level process to support the sanitization, de-labelling, recycling and re-use of glass alcohol containers."

Andy Fisher, Director of Industrial Outreach with the Faculty of Engineering at Memorial University, indicated that this project is “reflective of the way in which the university works with the local community to develop new industrial applications. Partners such as Ever Green can leverage the incredible breadth and depth of capabilities at the University to meet their corporate objectives while we all benefit from more sustainable systems.”

Ever Green Environmental has initiated efforts to ensure patent protection.

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