



For Immediate Release

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Contact: Sue Campbell, General Manager  
613-735-7537, ext. 214 or 613-401-3998

## **Plastic Bag Reduction Better Than Recycling OVWRC commends local grocery retailer for promoting reusable shopping bags**

**Pembroke, ON:** When consumers are considering ways to be more “green” it’s important to take into consideration the hierarchy of the three R’s. Reduce and Reuse come before Recycle. It’s this concept that the new national program by Loblaws to reduce the use of plastic bags is built on.

Moncion Grocers, an independent franchise of Loblaws, is following suit. Beginning on Earth Day – April 22<sup>nd</sup>, all three locations of Moncion Grocers will begin charging 5 cents per plastic bag. Customers will be encouraged to bring their own reusable bags or containers which are also available for purchase at each Moncion location.

**“We are pleased that all major grocery retailers in the area are taking steps to encourage customers to reduce the number of plastic bags they use.”** Comments Tom Mohns, Town of Petawawa Councilor and Vice-Chair of the Ottawa Valley Waste Management Board. **“Plastic bags are recyclable but at a cost.”**

Sue Campbell, General Manager of the Ottawa Valley Waste Recovery Centre explains the issues related to plastic bag recycling. **“The costs to manage plastic bags once they arrive at the Centre’s Material Recovery Facility are significant. We have been successful in securing end markets for our plastic bags however the Centre receives zero revenue for them. Plastic bag reduction will assist us in reducing our operating costs.”**

Reusable bags have been aggressively promoted at many local retailers and the Centre’s incoming tonnages support this. **“In 2007, the Centre processed 91 tonnes of plastic bags. In 2008 that number dropped to 68 tonnes. That’s pretty significant and it’s because local retailers have taken the lead in implementing programs at their stores to encourage the use of reusable bags.”** States Ms. Campbell.

**“We would encourage all residents to bring their own reusable bags wherever they shop.”** States Steve Bennett, Township of Laurentian Valley Councilor and Chair of the Ottawa Valley Waste Management Board. **“Any way we can reduce the amount of plastic bags we have to process helps all of us.”**

Remembering to bring your reusable bags or containers into a store when you are shopping can be a challenge so follow these tips to make it easier. Put shopping bags at the top of your grocery list, ask your kids to remind you, as soon as you empty them place them on the door knob of your front door so you remember to take them back to your vehicle, put a note on your dash board to remind you or purchase a few compact, foldable bags that you can keep with you in your purse, jacket pocket or backpack.

It’s estimated that Canadians now use about 55 million plastic bags weekly. Loblaws is estimating that the new program will help decrease the number of plastic shopping bags it distributes nationally by 55% and help eliminate 1 billion plastic shopping bags in 2009.