Environmental Assessment Reforms – Supporting Alternatives to Direct Landfill Disposal

**Issue:** The Ministry of the Environment has enacted a new Regulation under the *Environmental Assessment Act* and put in place amendments under the *Environmental Protection Act* for waste recycling, alternative fuels, and new/emerging technologies. The proposed regulatory changes, while still addressing environmental stewardship, will help streamline the process and provide cost-savings.

**Background:** The initiatives contain the following components:

- Small rural landfills or expansions of between 40,000 and 100,000 cubic metres would go through an environmental screening process rather than a full EA. This is expected to save municipalities 18 months and thousands of dollars.
- Proponents can pilot new waste technologies without having to undergo an EA providing they are small and can meet the Ministry’s air emission standards.
- Recycling facilities of any size will not have to go through the EA process providing just 1,000 tonnes per day of residual waste ends up going to disposal.
- It will be easier to recycle certain wastes that currently do not meet existing exemption criteria. Included are waste paint, crumb rubber, batteries and electronics.
- Converting certain wastes into alternative fuels while no longer would require waste management approvals, would still need to meet air emission standards.

**Response:** AMO strongly endorses and encourages municipal governments to support the proposed Regulation. It is consistent with positions set out in our previous submissions to the Ministry of the Environment regarding waste-related Environmental Assessment reform.

This Regulation should assist municipalities in addressing the growing gap between the amount of annual waste processing and disposal capacity that is required in the province, by:

- Encouraging the timely development of facilities that process and further recover materials from waste and/or generate waste derived fuels;
- Applying an environmental screening process to both small scale landfill developments or expansions as well as for the development of energy from waste facilities.
- Streamlining the EA approvals requirements, and achieving efficiencies in time and expense for many smaller municipalities across the province that require small scale landfill sites or small scale expansions in order to provide for short and/or long term disposal needs, but who do not have the resources to pursue alternative approaches.