

December 5, 2025

Hon. George Heyman
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Government of British Columbia
Victoria, BC

Delivered via email to: ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Heyman,

Subject: Request for Ministerial Support to Reinstate or Exempt School Districts from ICI Recycling Restrictions

As trustees of the Board of Education for qathet School District (SD47), we are committed to advancing environmental stewardship and sustainability education, as reflected in our 2023–2028 Strategic Plan Framework. Recycling programs are central to these efforts, serving both operational and educational purposes in helping students understand their role in environmental responsibility and the circular economy.

In December 2024, our Board wrote to MLA Randene Neill to express concern regarding the loss of access to Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional (ICI) Packaging and Paper Product (PPP) recycling services in Powell River. This change followed the withdrawal of Recycle BC's special licensing arrangements for rural communities, leaving our schools without a viable recycling option. We are now seeking your Ministry's guidance and assistance in identifying a sustainable, equitable solution for K–12 institutions.

Impact on Schools and Students

Our district's schools continue to make genuine efforts toward zero-waste goals, yet the lack of recycling options remains a significant barrier. This contradiction risks undermining the very environmental habits and values we strive to instill in students. While we actively promote waste reduction and responsible consumption, there is still a strong and ongoing need for accessible recycling systems to support these goals.

The curriculum-aligned resources developed by Recycle BC, such as *Learning with Recycle BC*, provide excellent opportunities for students to learn about waste reduction, contamination prevention, and resource recovery. However, without a functioning recycling system in place, students are unable to apply these lessons in real-world contexts, which limits the educational and behavioral impact of these valuable provincial resources.

Request for Ministerial Action

We respectfully request that the Ministry:

1. Review the current Recycling Regulation (B.C. Reg. 449/2004) to determine whether exemptions or alternate compliance mechanisms can be provided to K-12 institutions in rural and remote communities;
2. Direct Recycle BC to collaborate with qathet School District, the City of Powell River, and the qathet Regional District to explore reinstating ICI PPP collection for schools as part of a rural education recycling pilot project; and
3. Provide guidance on long-term solutions that ensure school districts are supported in achieving sustainability goals consistent with provincial environmental and educational objectives.

Our Board would welcome an opportunity to meet with your Ministry and Recycle BC to discuss potential pathways for reintroducing school-based recycling systems in our region. We believe this partnership could serve as a model for other small and rural districts striving to achieve environmental and educational alignment.

Thank you for your leadership in supporting British Columbia's transition to a circular economy and for your consideration of this request. We look forward to your response and to continued collaboration on this important issue.

Yours truly,



Jaclyn Miller
Chairperson
Board of Education
qathet School District

cc: Hon. Randene Neill, MLA, Powell River–Sunshine Coast
Mayor Ron Woznow and Council, City of Powell River
Chair Clay Brander and Board, qathet Regional District
Allen Langdon, Chief Executive Officer, Recycle BC
Jared Formosa, Director of Operations