

NEWS RELEASE

Canadians generate 2 per cent less waste than in 2002

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For immediate release

CALGARY—Despite a growing economy, Canadians now generate less waste on a per-person basis than we did in 2002, finds a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan, Canadian public policy think-tank.

“While Canada’s population and economy have grown, the proportion of waste we generate has actually declined,” said Elmira Aliakbari, director of the Centre for Natural Resource Studies at the Fraser Institute and co-author of *Generation and Management of Municipal Solid Waste: How’s Canada Doing?*

The study finds that, on a per-person basis, Canadians generated 959 kilograms of municipal solid waste (MSW)—such as food scraps, electronics, used packaging, old computers, newspapers and other waste generated by businesses and households—in 2018 compared to 980 kilograms in 2002.

But while overall per-person waste generation is declining, waste from residential sources (basically, waste produced by households) is on the rise and now comprises more than 40 per cent of total waste generation. On the other hand, waste generation from non-residential sources—industrial, commercial, etc.—declined between 2002 and 2018.

“The reduction in Canada’s overall waste production is clearly being driven by reductions in the business sector,” commented Aliakbari.

Most provinces recorded a reduction in waste generation over the same time period. Notable per-person MSW generation reductions occurred in Manitoba (9 per cent decrease), British Columbia (7 per cent), Ontario (5 per cent), and Quebec (3 per cent).

“The fact that Canada has generated less per person waste since 2002, despite a growing economy, is good news for the environment,” Aliakbari said.

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