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It's in the bag

Halton hopes to extend life of landfill with new program to promote recycling

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Save your plastic bags.

Halton Region has launched the Take It Back program, where people can return their plastic bags to retailers and put them in a specially marked bin in hopes of promoting the 3Rs -- reduce, reuse and recycle.

"People can start bringing in their plastic bags to certain retailers to be reused instead of being used once and sent to the landfill site," Halton Regional Chairman Gary Carr said.

The Take It Back program is working with local businesses to educate them on the needs and opportunities for recycling their products.

The plastic bag is the first item for the Take It Back program. Eventually, more retail partners will be added and other items could include cellphones, compact fluorescent light bulbs, eye glasses, oil filters, pharmaceuticals and rechargeable batteries.

"Plastic bags take a long time to deteriorate in landfills. With the program, we can reuse it again and again and again or get it recycled properly," Carr said.

EXTEND LIFE OF LANDFILL

"Our goal is to have less go into the landfill sites. We believe we can get our diversion rate up from 43% to 60% or more by next year with this program and the Green Cart program we're starting in April," Carr said.

Halton is the only municipality in the GTA operating its own landfill site, located in Milton on Regional Road 25.

With the introduction of the Take It Back and Green Cart programs, they hope to extend the life of Halton's waste management from 17 years of landfill life left to an extra eight years.

Retailers participating in the Take it Back program include A & P, Dominion, Food Basics, Fortinos, Home Outfitters, Loblaws, Longos, Price Chopper, Real Canadian Superstore, Sobeys, The Barn Fruit Markets, The Bay, Ultra Food and Drug, Wal-Mart Canada, Whole Food Market and Zellers locations in Halton. For more information, log onto www.halton.ca/takeitback.