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Pick up the boxes you make, firms told

By KWOK WONG, SUN MEDIA

Ontario property taxpayers are picking up the tab for companies that create tonnes of garbage through excessive unrecyclable packaging.

"I tell my kids, if you make a mess you pick it up," said Pat Vanini, executive director of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

AMO wants companies manufacturing consumers packaging to pay for cleanup.

According to AMO, a quarter of the waste municipalities manage is packaging that comes with everything from food to household appliances -- and it costs each property taxpayer about \$55 a year.

'REDUCE WASTE'

"Property taxpayers should not subsidize companies that create garbage," AMO president Doug Reycraft said in a news release.

"Making industry responsible for the printed paper and the packaging it produces will reduce waste, reduce municipal costs, and better protect Ontario's environment."

AMO's proposal comes after a recent Statistics Canada study found that garbage disposal in Ontario rose in 2006 to 10.4 from 9.8 million tonnes.

At the same time, the waste diversion rate decreased by 1%.

SHIFTS RESPONSIBILITY

"Anything that shifts the responsibility onto the producer is a good thing," said Chris Winter, executive director of the Conservation Council of Ontario.

Consumers can have a hand in reducing waste as well, Winter noted. "Use the system that's there," he said, urging consumers to make full use of the green and blue bins.

His other tips include:

- Shopping wisely, avoiding products with non-recyclable packaging like styrofoam containers and blister packs;
- Buying durable products, "it pays to buy quality;"
- Buying rechargeable batteries.