

## Region cool to provincial suggestion

The province's suggestion for mandatory returning of empty liquor and wine bottles to Liquor Control Board outlets is an idea of which Halton Region apparently wants no part.

Halton Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy said Wednesday during a Regional Planning and Public Works meeting, "the idea seems like an obvious one to support but when you start to think about it it may not be."

Chairman Pomeroy's comment followed a request from Mark McKenny of the Ontario Multi-Material Recycling Incorporated group (OMMRI) for the Region to oppose the idea.

Committee members decided to receive and file OMMRI's request. Receive and file is another way of saying the Region will take no action on the matter.

The province is currently considering two options for empty liquor and wine bottles. The first is a returnable system and the second is refillable bottle system.

Under the returnable system people would return their liquor and wine bottles to an LCBO outlet which in turn would be responsible for having the bottles recycled.

Mr. McKenny said a returnable system would require the province duplicating the existing blue box infrastructure and the end result being a waste of money. Currently wine and liquor bottles are diverted from the waste stream through the blue box program. If wine and liquor bottles were returnable, the LCBO would need recycling bins, additional trucks and recycling depots to handle the bottles, he said.

Mr. McKenny objected to the refillable bottle system because it could spell the end of glass recycling. He told committee members the majority of recycled glass today is wine and liquor bottle glass. If refillable bottles replaced glass bottles then bottle manufacturers would no longer need to buy glass to make their product.

OMMRI is comprised of over 300 companies including newspapers, grocery distributors, product manufacturers, and packaging suppliers and distributors.

Although committee members seemed receptive to Mr. McKenny's arguments they remain unconvinced about giving him their support.

Several councillors said the Region should withhold any support for OMMRI's position until industry provides more funding to municipalities to finance their respective blue box programs. Halton's blue box program doesn't generate enough revenue to pay for itself, committee members all pointed out.

Burlington Regional Coun. Rob Forbes summed up the feelings of many committee members when he said, "it doesn't matter what system (per se) the province eventually adopts as long as the municipality doesn't have to bear the brunt of the cost."

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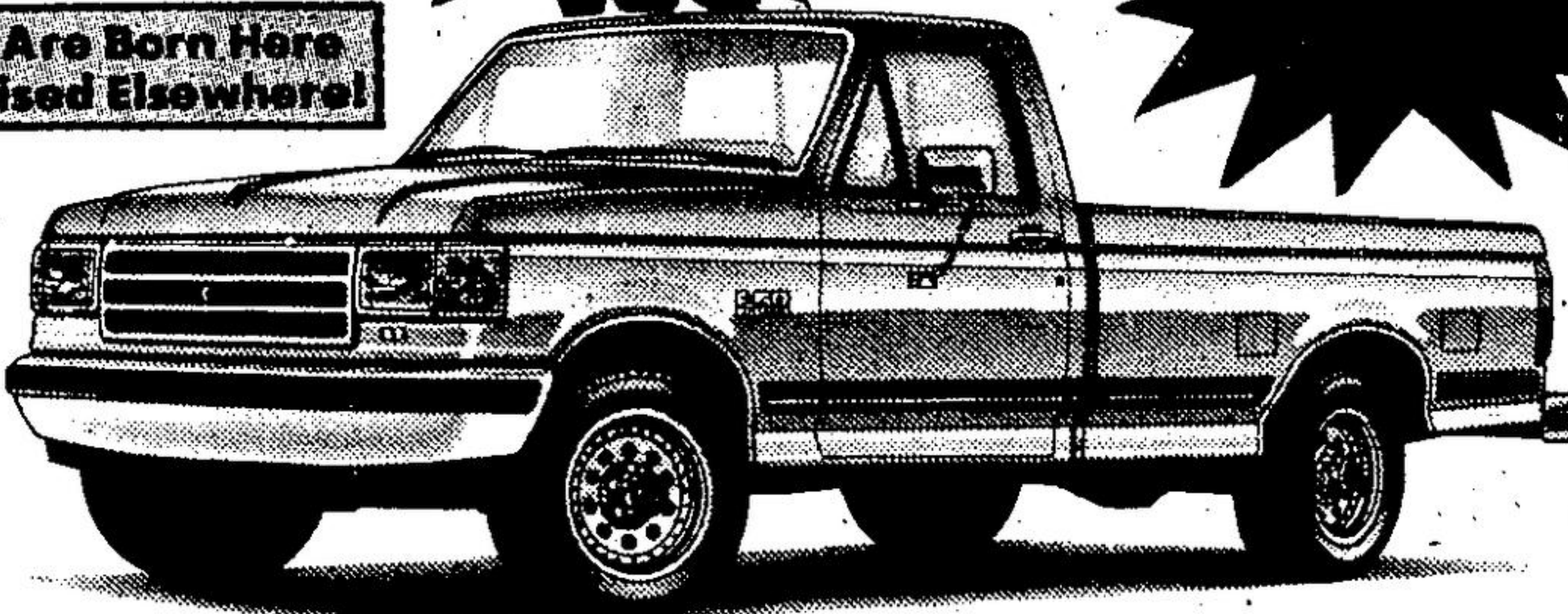
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