

Blue Bag for Paper gets good response but... there's still a lot of questions being asked

The reusable Blue Plastic Bag for Paper has been in use now throughout Halton Region for almost two months. It has been well received by the residents.

As residents become familiar with the bags, several questions have been commonly asked, and Halton Region staff provide the answers:

Q: Will they collect my papers if they are not in the reusable bag?

A: Yes, if properly placed at the curbside. The bag is simply designed to provide residents, who have curbside recycling collection, with a container for their papers. The bag eliminates the need to tie the papers in bundles.

However, if you wish to continue this practice or put the papers in a blue box or similar recycling container they will still be collected.

As always, please do not place your papers in plastic shopping bags or mix papers with the containers— these two streams must be kept separate for effective and efficient recycling to take place.

Q: Why can't I use plastic shopping bags for my papers?

A: Plastic shopping bags are not recyclable in Halton's program and, therefore, are a serious contaminant.

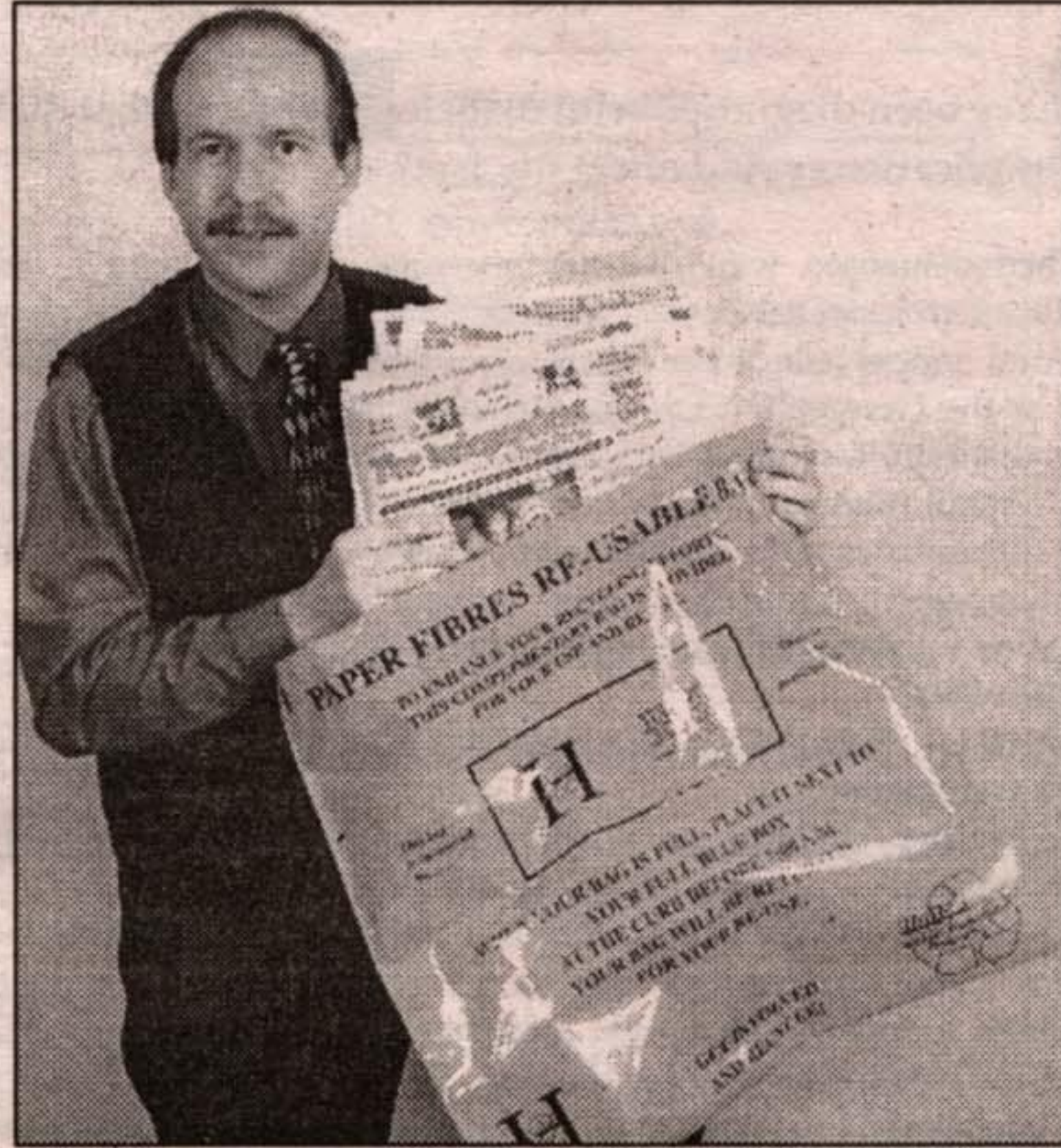
The Region of Halton and its recycling contractors have tried unsuccessfully for many years to find a recycling market for the bags. Because we cannot recycle them at this time, they end up being thrown in the garbage at the recycling facility.

They also cause delays in the sorting process and, if they get mixed with the bales of paper being sold to a market, the money received for the bales will be rejected and sent back to us for reprocessing, all of which are very costly.

Q: The bags are not big enough to hold all my papers. What do I do?

A: You can pick up an extra one at the Halton Hills Civic Centre, the Region of Halton Administration office at 1151 Bronte Road, Oakville or at

Halton Recycling (our recycling contractor) at 1122 Pioneer Road, Burlington— or



Halton Hills Regional Councillor Rick Bonnette demonstrated how a blue bag is used when it was first introduced earlier this year.

you can bundle extra papers or put them into a separate Blue Box.

Q: Why don't the bags have handles?

A: Two pilot programs were carried out prior to the bag program being implement-

ed region-wide. Residents in the pilot areas indicated that handles would help.

The contractor researched this issue with bag manufacturers and was told that any type of handle that could be cut into or attached to the bag would not be durable enough and would eventually break. Therefore, the added expense would not be worthwhile.

However, in order to make the bags easier to carry, an extra five inches were added to the top of the bag and an expandable bottom was installed.

These two features allow the paper to sit better in the bottom of the bag and the extra five inches at the top can be rolled up to form a handle.

Q: How do I stop my bag from blowing away?

A: If you place your bag of papers out beside your blue box or similar recycling container, the collection personnel will place the empty bag under the container after it is emptied.

If you are placing the bag at the curbside without a container, please place a brick, stone or similar heavy object beside the bag and the collector will place the object on the empty bag to secure it.

Also, please ensure you place your address on the bag in the spot provided so you (or your neighbor) can identify your bag if it does go missing.

Q: How much did this program cost the taxpayers of Halton?

A: Nothing. Our recycling contractor, Halton Recycling Ltd. in Burlington, corporately sponsored the entire cost of the bags and their distribution.

This program is simply designed to make it more convenient for the residents of Halton to recycle, improve the efficiency of the contractor's collection and processing operations and increase the diversion of recyclables from Halton's landfill.

If you have any further questions, call Halton Recycling Ltd. at (905) 336-8964 or 1-888-403-3333 or Halton's Waste Management Division at (905) 825-6034.

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