



Toronto Civic Employees' Union, Local 416

110 Laird Drive
Toronto, ON M4G 3V3

LOCAL 416

Affiliated with the Canadian
Labour Congress and the
Labour Council of Toronto
& York Region

EDDIE MARICONDA
President

SAV DASKALAKIS
Vice President

DOMENIC MAUGERI
Secretary-Treasurer

PAUL CLEVELAND
2nd Vice President

TED AIVALIS
*3rd Vice President/
Chief of Stewards*

ROB NICHOL
Outside Chair

CARMINE FIORE
Chief of Health & Safety

ANTHONY FRACASSI
Recording Secretary

Re: IE27.5 – Transition of the Blue Box Program to Extended Producer Responsibility – Preliminary Post-Transition Implementation Update

Submitted to: Infrastructure & Environment Committee

From: Toronto Civic Employees' Union (TCEU) Local 416

Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this deputation on behalf of the 8,000+ frontline workers represented by Local 416. Since January 1, 2026, when provincial Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) shifted residential blue box collection from municipalities to producer-run systems, Torontonians have experienced missed, delayed, and partial collections; overflowing bins; and unclear lines of accountability. Residents are still calling 311. City staff still take the heat. But the City no longer controls the service. That's not good governance and it's not good service.

These failures are not the fault of residents or City workers. This was predicted. When essential public services are fragmented and contracted out to for-profit companies who are not directly accountable to City Council or the communities we serve.

We appreciate that IE27.5 provides an early, transparent look at post-transition performance, and that Council is seeking regular reporting on 311 volumes, complaint types, missed-collection hotspots, impacts on City-collected waste streams, and regulatory compliance. Transparency is the first step to rebuilding trust. But reporting without authority cannot fix a broken system.

Toronto's public waste operations are staffed by experienced, unionized professionals who understand our city's routes, buildings, laneways, and seasons; who can surge resources during storms or holidays; and who can be held accountable by Council.

Indeed, the Districts where collection is public are known to be some of the most difficult in North America. Private contractors often refuse to collect in the most challenging parts of our city, such as the islands and parks.

When service is public, you can directly fix problems by rebalancing routes, adjusting staffing, improving communication without waiting on a private counterparty that has different incentives.

The past month has shown that when responsibility and authority are decoupled, residents lose. The public system delivers better results because it is built for reliability, equity, and accountability, not for offloading risk.

.../2

Frontline member reports and 311 data gathered over the past several weeks released in the staff report reveal a consistent pattern of service breakdowns across multiple neighbourhoods and building types all across the city. While the specific circumstances vary, the issues fall into several recurring categories:

- Missed, delayed, or partial recycling collections, often extending multiple days beyond scheduled pickup.
- Overflowing blue bins, leading to contamination, litter migration, and diversion of material into garbage streams, which increases City costs.
- Obstructed sidewalks, laneways, and building access points caused by uncollected bins, creating mobility challenges, especially for seniors and people with disabilities.
- Contractor routing errors, particularly in dense urban areas and laneways, resulting in repeated no-shows and unreliable ETAs for building managers and residents.
- Inconsistent contractor practices, including partial lifts or bags left behind due to unclear or shifting crew instructions.
- Lack of contingency planning, with contractor vehicle breakdowns or staffing shortages leaving material curbside for extended periods, sometimes over weekends or near schools.
- Insufficient or absent communication to property managers, concierges, and residents when issues occur.

Across these examples, the core theme is clear: when service disruptions occur, the current model provides no mechanism for the City to directly intervene and stabilize service in real time.

By contrast, under public delivery, Toronto's waste operations have the ability to:

- reroute nearby public crews for same-day backfill,
- deploy small-vehicle or laneway teams as needed,
- conduct same-shift quality-assurance sweeps and retraining,
- adjust routes or GIS mapping immediately, and
- dispatch spare fleet units to prevent multi-day delays.

The data is clear and demonstrate that the service instability now being experienced is structural not episodic and stems from the absence of direct public control. **Therefore, Local 416 maintains its position that the City of Toronto should work to seek an exemption from provincial rules where they impede reliable service.**

The regulator should be able to grant Toronto the flexibility to directly manage service delivery and performance where producers fall short, up to and including restoring municipal control of routes, standards, communications, and contingency operations.

Committee and Council should also consider:

- Directing the General Manager to maintain and enhance public collection capacity (routes, staffing, trucks, yards) as a stability backstop for the EPR era, rather than letting public capacity atrophy while we wait for private correction.
- Publish monthly ward dashboards (311 volumes, complaint types, missed-collection maps, tonnage shifts, contamination trends) and include a formal frontline-reporting channel. This restores transparency in a producer-run model, gives Council evidence to target interventions and cost recovery, and surfaces early warnings from workers so issues are fixed before they become city-wide problems.

Local 416 members are the reason Toronto's public services are resilient. We scale up during storms. We adapt to construction, festivals, and school schedules. We keep routes safe and clean during heatwaves and cold snaps. And we answer to you, not a quarterly earnings target.

This EPR experience is not an isolated incident. It is part of a growing pattern: when vital City functions are privatized or fragmented, services become less reliable, complaints rise, and accountability evaporates. The City's remedy should be clear: keep essential services public and when necessary, bring them back in-house.

For residents, the standard is simple: Did my recycling get picked up, properly and on time, with clear communication when it didn't? That's the standard Local 416 stands behind. Give Toronto the authority and tools to meet it consistently by insulating essential services from fragmented privatization and restoring public control where it's been lost.

Sincerely,



Vice President
Toronto Civic Employees' Union
CUPE Local 416

TA:dr
cope343