

# **Bagging a Single-use Habit Regulated Source Reduction in the NWT**

## **Under the Big Top**

Conference on Canadian Stewardship /  
Recycling Council of Alberta Annual Conference  
Banff, AB; September 30, 2015

Michelle Hannah

Waste Reduction Specialist

Department of Environment and Natural Resources

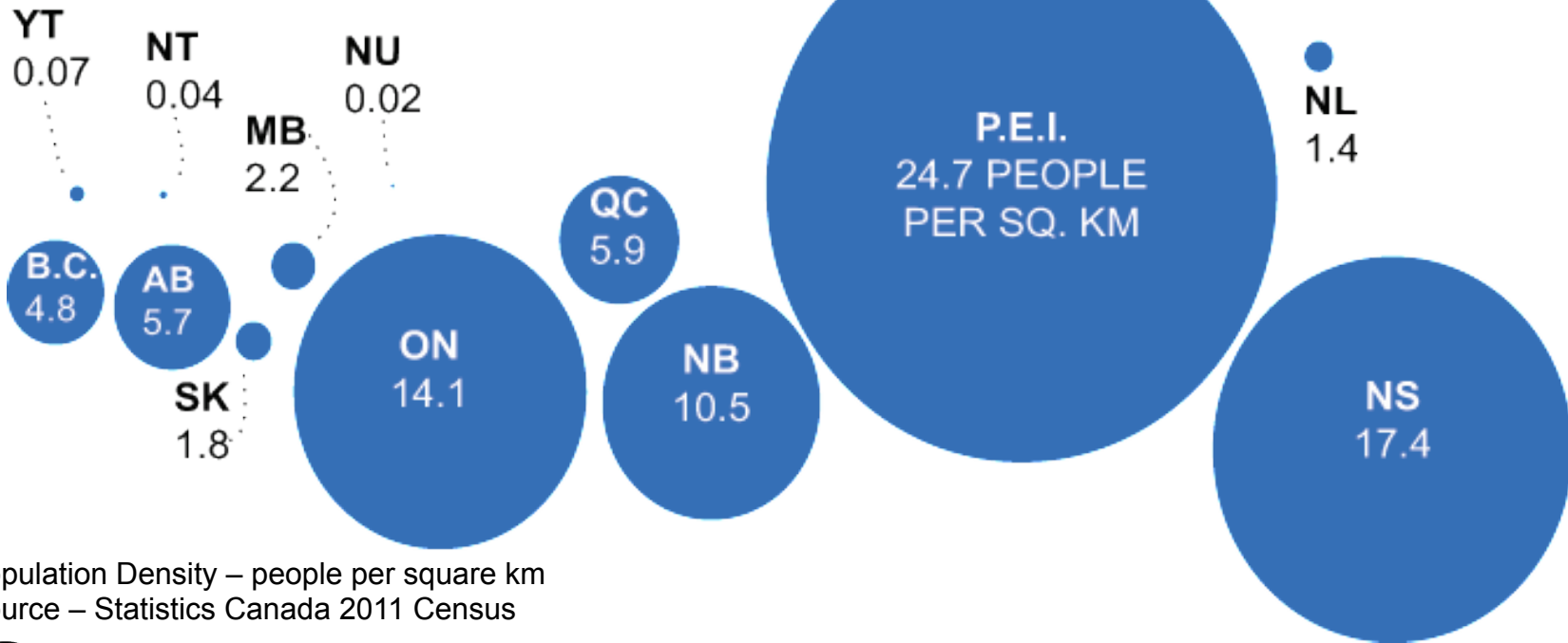


# Overview

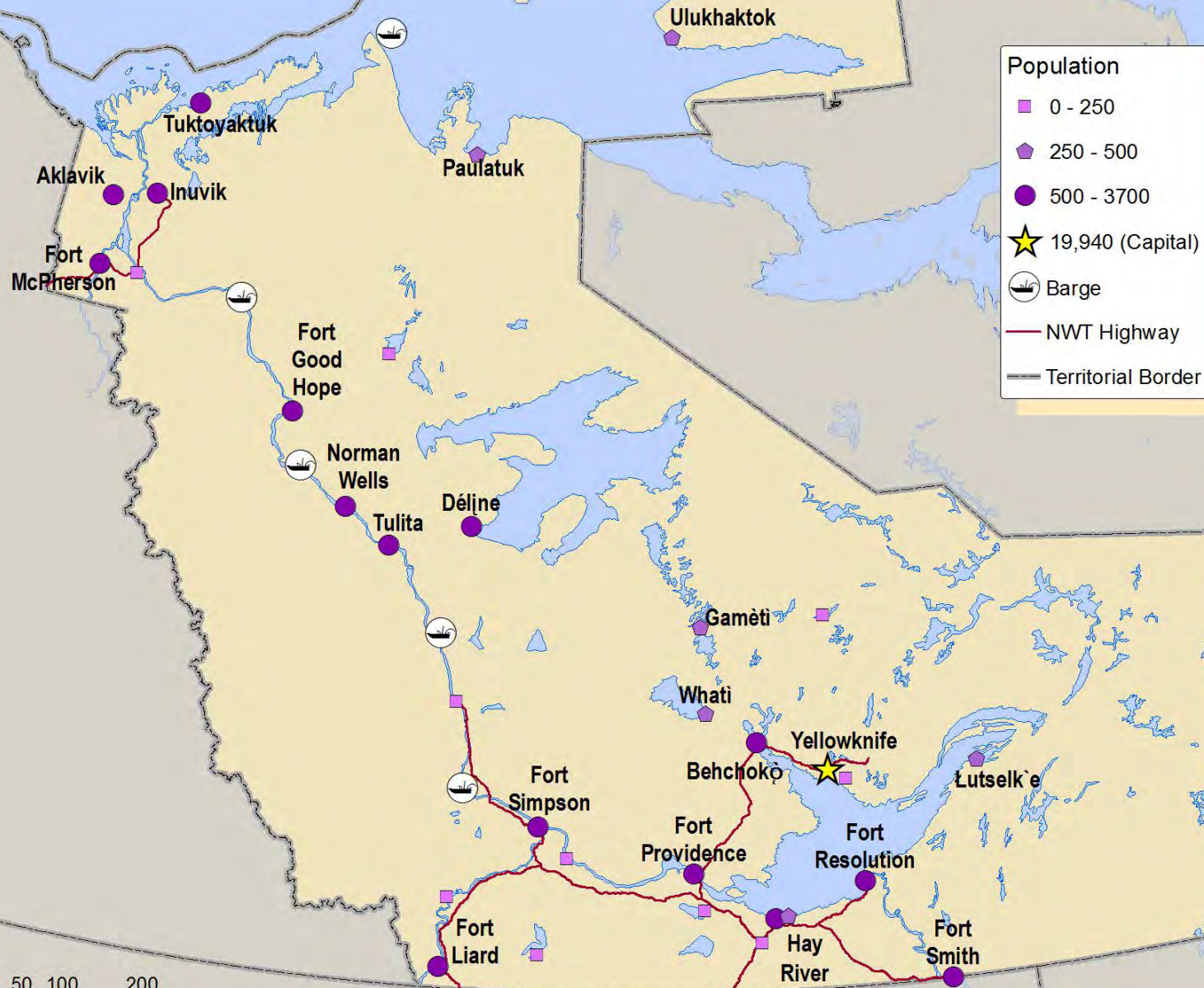
- NWT Context
- Why Single-use Retail Bags?
- Program Goals
- Benefits of a bag fee program
- Single-use Retail Bag Program
- Results
- Challenges
- Components of success
- Success (in non-bag terms)

# NWT Context

- Small population (1% of AB)
- Low population density
- Limited capacity
- Limited infrastructure



# NWT Communities by population (2014)



# NWT Context

## Remote communities

- 17 year-round (or near year-round) road access
- 11 winter road access
- 5 barge or fly-in only



# NWT Legislation

## *Waste Reduction and Recovery Act*

- Enables creation of programs to reduce, reuse and recycle materials in the NWT
- Environment Fund
  - Special purpose fund for waste reduction and recovery programs and initiatives only



# Why Single-use Retail Bags?



- Complaints of unsightly litter on the land
- Strong political will

# Program Goals



- Reduce bag litter on our land, and
- Create a greater awareness of waste reduction and environmental stewardship



# Source Reduction

• Fee

~~• Ban~~

# Benefits of Fee

- Generate revenue to run program and fund other waste reduction and recovery programs and initiatives
- Avoid shift to potentially worse alternatives
- Consumers/retailers retain choice to use bags
- Public education opportunity – consumers make a choice with every purchase

# Setting the Fee

- Higher fee = fewer bags
- Irish Plastax:
  - 2002 = 0.15€ (20¢ CAD)
  - 2007 = 0.22 € (30¢ CAD)

• 25 ¢

# Single-use Retail Bag Program



**START**  
*a bag habit!*

Starting February 1, 2011, all paper, plastic and biodegradable bags will cost 25¢ in all NWT stores. Start a bag habit, and remember your reusable bags every time you go shopping!



[www.icarenwt.ca](http://www.icarenwt.ca)





# Single-use Retail Bag Program

## What is included?

- All Single-use Retail Bags:
  - Plastic
  - Paper
  - Biodegradable
- Exemptions:
  - Bags for prescriptions; bulk items, fruit and vegetables; prepared food; hardware



# Who is Included in the Program?

**PHASE I**



Grocery Stores  
(Jan 15, 2010)

**PHASE II**

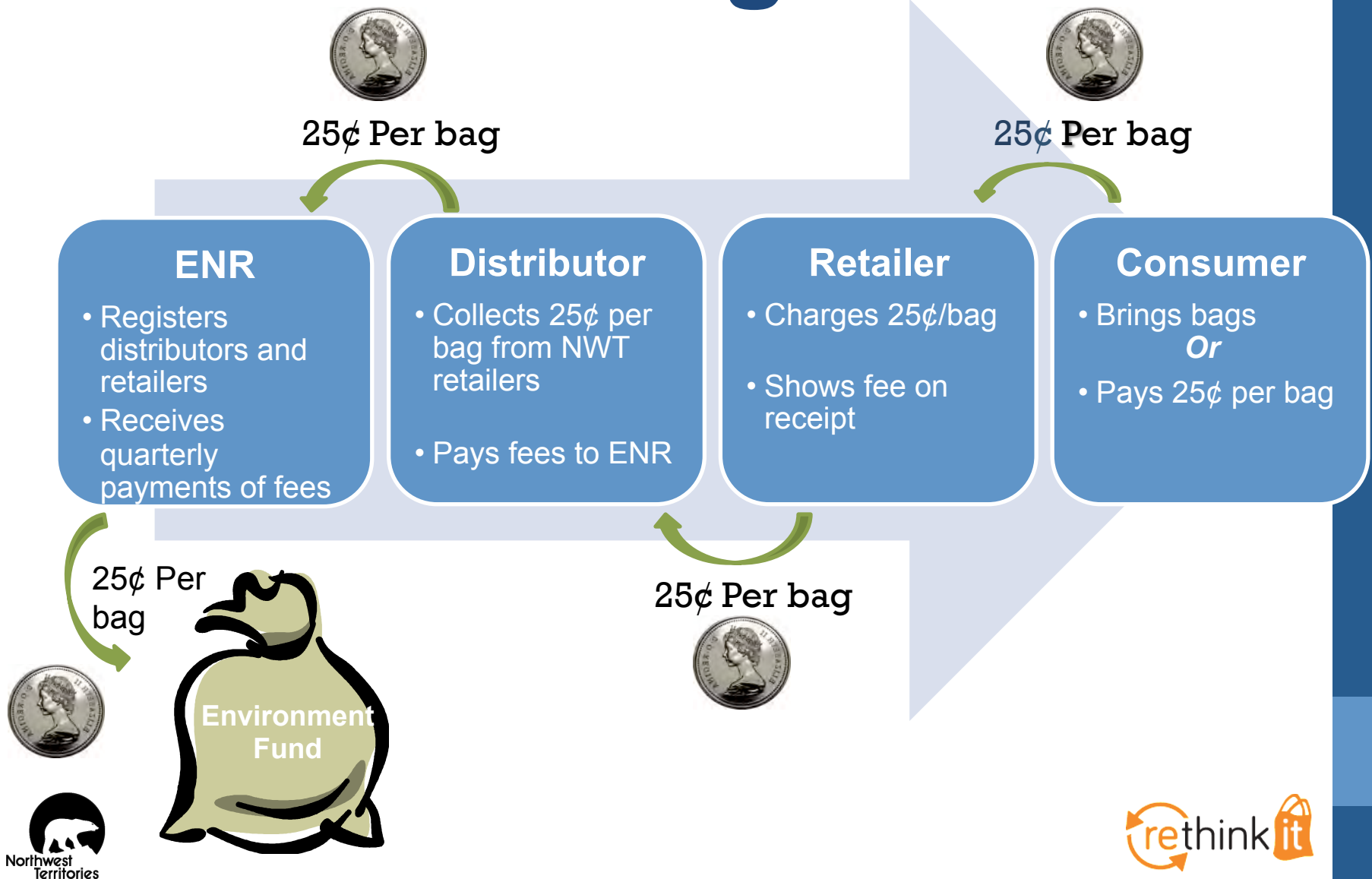


All Retail Stores (Feb 1,  
2011)

Restaurants not included



# How the Program Works



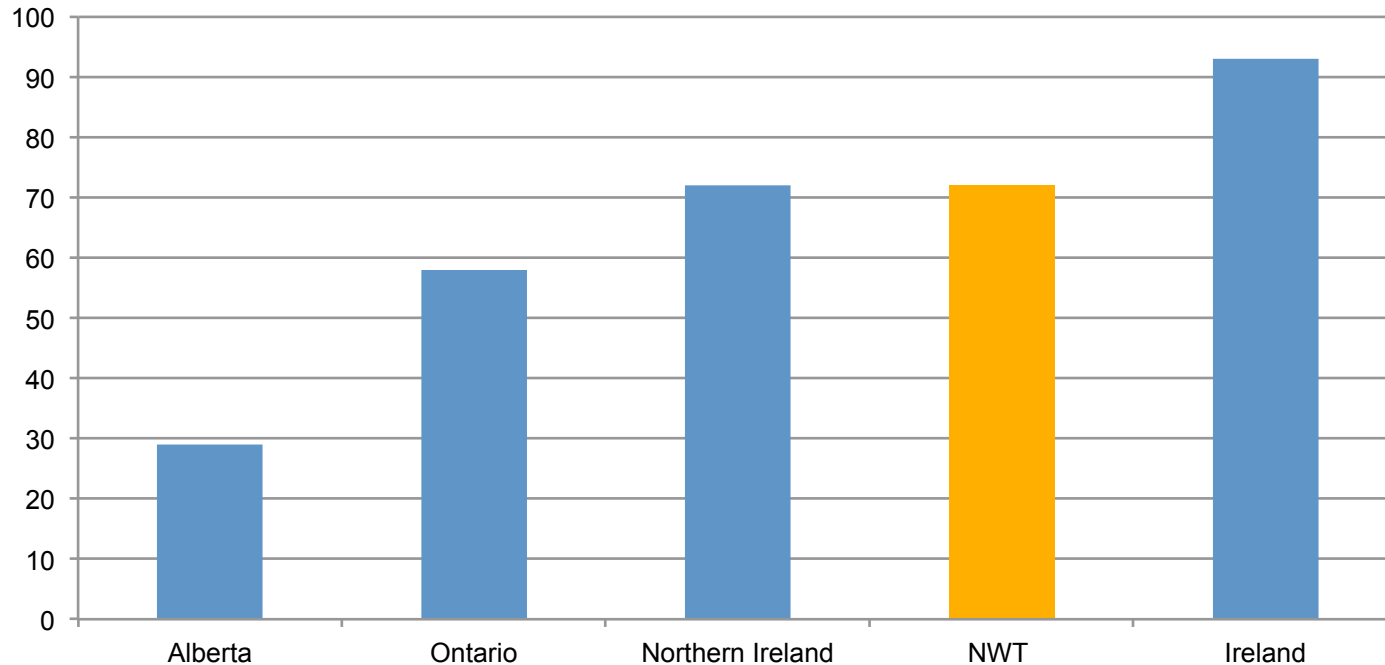
# Results

- ✓ 80 Bag-free businesses
- ✓ 30 million bags avoided
- ✓ 72% reduction in bag use
- ✓ \$2.6 million revenue



# Results – Compared to Elsewhere

Approximate Reduction Values (%)



Voluntary Reduction  
Plastic Bags

5p (10 ¢)  
All SRBs

25¢ Fee  
All SRBs

0.22€ (30¢) Levy  
Plastic Bags

# Results

## Testimonials:

- Communities
- Residents
- Landfill/sewage lagoon operators



Public support for program: little push-back



➤ Positive sign that members of the NWT public are willing to be good environmental stewards

# Challenges

- Keeping track of new distributors and retailers
- Accuracy in measuring results

# Components of Success

- Strong political leadership
- Extensive public engagement and education
  - Consultation regarding materials the Waste Reduction and Recovery Program should address
  - Pre-program – voluntary bag reduction education
  - Stakeholder engagement prior to Phases I and II
  - Program launch – communications and free bags
  - Soon to launch a new public education campaign to remind people to bring their bags – part of our overall rebranding of “icare” to “rethinkit”

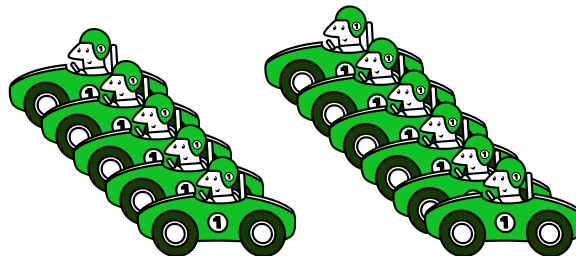


# Components of Success

- Fees collected from distributors
  - Simpler for retailers
  - Greater assurance that fee is passed on
  - Fewer parties for GNWT to manage
- Phased in program
  - A smooth Phase I allowed for easy transition to Phase II
- Fees go to the Environment Fund
  - Public supports bag fees going toward other waste reduction and recovery programs and initiatives.

# Success – in non-bag terms

- Not using ~7.1 million bags annually = 59 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions avoided
- Equivalent to taking 11 vehicles off the road annually



# If they were all T-shirt bags, 30 million bags...

Would stretch from Banff to beyond  
Maputo, Mozambique



30 million bags  
≈ 16,380 km



# Success – in non-bag terms

**Tired of seeing garbage in your community?**  
**Want to do something about it?**

Funding is available for municipalities, schools, organizations, businesses and individuals to reduce, reuse or recycle waste in your community.

For more information, visit [icare.nwt.ca](http://icare.nwt.ca),  
email [nwtrecycle@gov.nt.ca](mailto:nwtrecycle@gov.nt.ca) or call (867) 873-7654

Deadline to apply is April 15, 2014



# Success – in non-bag terms

## Dettah Recycling Centre

- **Satellite recycling centre**
  - Public education
- **Household hazardous waste collection area**
  - Regular removal for safe recycling and disposal





# Success – in non-bag terms

Safe Recycling of 4,800L of used oil from Public Works yard in Behchokò





# Success – in non-bag terms

## Shredded Tires into Tire Derived Aggregate

- Hay River, Fort Smith and Yellowknife – joint project
- Rental of an industrial tire shredder
- 105-140,000 tires
- End product can be used for road construction, insulating backfill and retaining walls.



# Electronics Recycling Pilot Project

> 25 metric tonnes collected for recycling from 4 communities





# Thank you!

Michelle\_Hannah@gov.nt.ca

867-873-7379

[www.icarenwt.ca](http://www.icarenwt.ca)