

Experimental pilot projects to recycle glass in Québec

Very positive early results

Montréal, May 25, 2018 – Since the launch of experimental glass sorting and cleaning projects in five sorting centres across Québec in September 2017, Éco Entreprises Québec (ÉEQ) has continued to lead discussions with partners to optimize the equipment and increase the quality of the recycled glass to provide the material with more added value.

It is from this perspective that the preliminary results of the experimental pilot projects have demonstrated progress across the board. Indeed, early figures reveal a substantial increase in the purity of the glass as compared to previous years, with an average level of up to 98%. The glass from the pilot projects meets current market specifications, and tests for new markets are conclusive.

The results also show that the glass processed by sorting centres was recycled and used in new applications: it was given a second life and diverted from landfills. The use of glass in abrasives, filtration systems and glass powders to build infrastructures is optimal, opening up a range of possibilities.

“We are very satisfied with the preliminary results. I firmly believe that we are on the right track. While we still have work to do, we have succeeded in producing high quality glass and giving it added value in response to the key challenges of glass sorting and processing. The door is now wide open for us to continue to develop markets to provide a second life for 100% of the glass recycled through curbside collection in Québec,” affirmed Maryse Vermette, president and CEO, ÉEQ.

“For the Société des alcools du Québec (SAQ), the main challenges of glass recycling lie in materials sorting and the commercialization of local outlets, especially for coloured glass, which makes up most of the glass placed on the market by the SAQ. There has recently been major progress: with the pilot projects implemented in five sorting centres, the glass recycling rate has risen from 14 to 50%. This effective approach serves to enhance the performance of the entire curbside recycling system and impacts all recycled glass, not just the 50% attributable to bottles of alcohol,” stated Catherine Dagenais, vice-president and chief operating officer, SAQ.

After nearly eight months of assessments and observations, the experimental pilot projects have made it possible to evaluate the performance of the equipment, particularly in winter. The systems were adapted to meet the specific constraints of glass recycling, and the new configurations are currently being tested. As the experimental pilot projects continue over the next few months, ÉEQ will explore new outlets for recycled glass to foster a circular economy.

About Éco Entreprises Québec

Éco Entreprises Québec (ÉEQ) is a private NPO that represents the companies that place containers, packaging and printed matter on the market in Québec as part of their responsibility to fund effective and efficient municipal curbside recycling services.

As an expert, ÉEQ optimizes the curbside recycling value chain and implements innovative approaches with a view to sustainable development and the circular economy.

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