

one third of board-owned buses (i.e. approximately 120 buses) will have to be replaced over the next 3 years. Officials indicated that a new bus costs approximately \$80,000. This would equate to approximately \$9.6 million.

There are no standards specific to school bus drivers included in legislation under the *Schools Act, 1997* in this Province and there is no current policy direction from the Department of Education setting out the employment and training requirements for school bus drivers. Furthermore, the Department of Education does not require the school boards to check for criminal records of all bus drivers. We found that a bus driver in the Avalon East School District who had a number of convictions for such matters as multiple impaired driving charges, multiple break and enter charges and multiple theft charges, was not prevented from driving a school bus.

We identified a situation at the Avalon East School Board where irregularities in the bus contract tendering process resulted in the board paying \$1.8 million more annually than in the previous years contract. Department of Education officials indicated that this issue was being reviewed, in consultation with Treasury Board Secretariat and the Department of Justice.

### **2.13 Solid Waste Management**

The Province has a significant issue to deal with regarding waste management. The problem resulted because historically, we have not recycled, there was no strategy as to either the number of landfill sites or their location, there was little control over access to the sites or what was being dumped, open burning and incinerators were commonly used, and the landfill sites were not lined.

In 1989, at a meeting of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, Government set a goal to reduce the amount of waste going for disposal by 50% by the year 2000. However, in 2002, Newfoundland and Labrador had a waste diversion rate of only 9%, the lowest rate of waste diversion of any province in Canada. The other Atlantic Provinces in 2002 averaged a diversion rate of 27% (three times the diversion rate in this Province) while the Canadian average for that year was 22%, again significantly higher than the diversion rate in this Province.

This Province has a disproportionate number of waste disposal sites compared to the other Atlantic Provinces. In 2004, the Province had 201 waste disposal sites versus a combined total of 25 disposal sites for the other three Atlantic Provinces.

A report prepared by Government's Waste Management Advisory Committee in October 2001 indicated that incinerators in our Province produce more than one-third of the total volume of dioxins and furans from municipal incineration in Canada. Open burning, which was not measured and is common in more than half of the sites in the Province, produces even more dioxins and furan emissions.

Although the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board (MMSB) has a mandate to develop, implement and manage effective waste management programs, it takes its direction from the Department of Environment and Conservation. However, the Department has not identified programs to adequately address all significant areas for waste diversion (e.g. paper and organic which account for 67% of waste). Furthermore, MMSB is not meeting its beverage recycling program targets and there are issues relating to its used tire recycling program.

In April 2002, a Provincial Waste Management Strategy was issued indicating that a Province-wide modern waste management system would be implemented by 2010. However, the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs has publicly expressed concerns about the amount and source of funding (\$150 - \$200 million) and timelines relating to the 2010 target date and the Minister of Environment and Conservation has publicly indicated that the Strategy is too ambitious. Furthermore, there is no schedule in the Strategy to indicate either when this funding will be required or the source of funding, e.g. Federal, Provincial, and municipal. In addition, the Strategy does not include annual targets to measure progress towards the various initiatives such as diverting waste, closing unlined landfill sites and constructing new lined sites.

Currently, none of the 201 landfill sites in the Province are lined. The use of a liner controls the escape of leachate and provides for its recovery and treatment to minimize potential environmental consequences. While the Strategy did not indicate that all unlined

sites would be remediated, it is likely that some sites will be determined to have contaminants at such a level that the sites will require remediation. As a result, there will likely be significant expenditures for site remediation.

Government does not have complete and accurate information available on its landfill sites to determine the status of each site for use in planning, implementation, and monitoring of these sites. For example, although a number of the waste disposal sites are nearing the end of their useful life, there is no information readily available to identify when these sites will expire or what alternate course of action will be taken when the sites expire. A consultant was engaged in September 2004 to gather information and assess and classify existing waste sites in the Province and a report is expected by December 2004.

## **2.14 Used Tire Recycling Program**

In April 2002, the Multi-Material Stewardship Board (MMSB), on Government's direction, implemented a Used Tire Recycling Program which currently operates under the authority of the *Waste Management Regulations, 2003* of the *Environment Protection Act*. Under these *Regulations*, used tires are no longer permitted to be disposed of in landfills throughout the Province. The goal of the Used Tire Recycling Program is to collect and process used tires in the Province.

The Used Tire Recycling Program since its inception in April 2002 could not be considered a success as it has not met its goal of collecting and processing used tires in the Province. For example, collection sites were not established in all areas of the Province, not all tires were collected from retailers and other sites, not all collected tires were processed, and not all processed tires were marketed and sold.

As at 31 October 2004, there are approximately 1.3 million passenger tire equivalents stored in five locations throughout the Province (including 461,965 in passenger tire equivalents stored and owned by a former MMSB contractor at the contractor's site in Stephenville).