

The Honourable Timothy Halman
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Government of Nova Scotia
P.O. Box 442
Halifax, NS B3J 2P8

May 22nd, 2026

RE: Sharps Disposal in Cumberland, Colchester and East Hants

Dear Minister Halman,

On behalf of the Nova Scotia Northern Region Solid Waste Resource Committee, we are writing to raise an increasingly serious concern regarding the disposal of sharps (needles) within the communities of Cumberland, East Hants, and Colchester.

The Committee understands that a regulated provincial sharps program is not currently under consideration. However, sharps continue to be found regularly across all waste streams, including illegal dumping sites, roadways, public spaces, waste transfer stations, Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs), and Enviro-Depots throughout Cumberland, East Hants and Colchester. These occurrences present an ongoing and significant risk to the general public, first responders and to waste management workers. At the Kemptown MRF, staff have documented weekly incidents, with more than 2,150 needles identified on recycling sorting lines since 2025.

Sharps represent a clear public health hazard. They are generated through both medical treatment and substance use, and improper disposal exposes workers and community members to the risk of injury and disease transmission. Municipalities and regional waste authorities continue to manage the consequences of this issue in the absence of a consistent and enforceable provincial framework. Furthermore, The Northern Region has learned that similar incidents are occurring and increasing across Nova Scotia. Appendix A, developed by the Regional Solid Waste Coordinators' Sharps Subcommittee, outlines reported exposure incidents and the locations where sharps are being found province-wide.

While the Committee acknowledges the value of existing education efforts and voluntary stewardship initiatives, these measures alone are not sufficient to address the current scale and persistence of the issue. Through direct engagement with local pharmacies in the Northern Region, it has been confirmed that the current voluntary disposal program frequently lacks an adequate supply of safe sharps containers, as well as consistent collection services. The Committee maintains that a regulated, provincially led sharps disposal program is necessary to ensure safe handling, reliable collection, and accountability across Nova Scotia.

Given the significant public health implications of sharps mismanagement, we have copied the Minister of Health and Wellness on this correspondence. Addressing this issue effectively will require coordinated action across both environmental and health mandates.

The Northern Region Committee respectfully requests that the Province reconsider its current position and engage with municipal and regional partners to explore options for a regulated approach. We would welcome the opportunity to share frontline experiences of the issues being faced beyond Appendix A attached.

Sincerely,



Councilor Paul Weatherby, Municipality of Colchester
Chair, Nova Scotia Northern Region Solid Waste Resource Committee

cc: The Honourable Michelle Thompson, Minister of Health and Wellness
NS Solid Waste-Resource Management Regional Chairs Committee
Nova Scotia Northern Region Solid Waste Resource Committee

Appendix A: Recent Sharp Reporting Examples



Figure 1: Colchester, Illegal dump March 27th, 2025

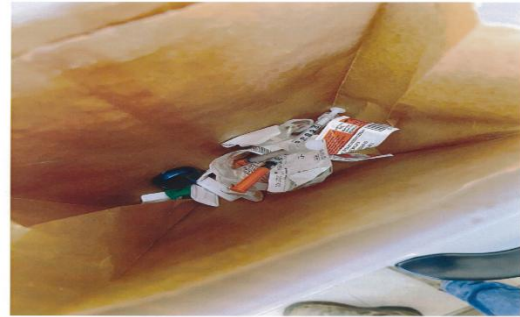


Figure 2: Windsor, Community Center. Feminine Product Disposal – March 27th, 2025



Figure 3: Colchester, Recycling Sorting Line – April 24th 2025



Figure 4: Lawrencetown, Transfer Facility – April 16th 2025



Figure 5: Yarmouth, Senior's Home – March 25th 2025



Figure 6: Illegal Dumpsite, Guysborough County - May 29th, 2025

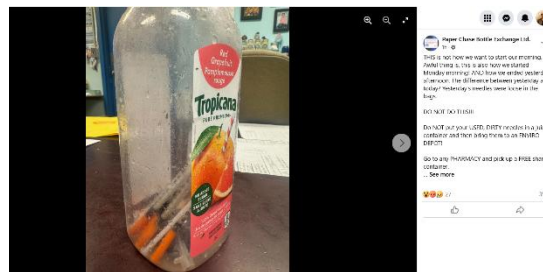


Figure 7: Yarmouth, Paper Chase Bottle Exchange – March 25th 2025

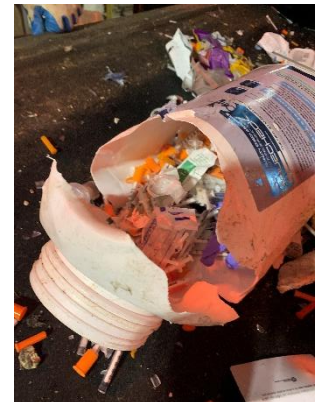


Figure 8: Colchester, Recycling Sorting Line – January 8th 2025



Figure 9: Sidewalk, Middleton Nova Scotia - March 27, 2025



Figure 20: Roadside Litter Clean Up, Yarmouth
- March 19th 2026



Figure 31: Illegal Dumpsite, Pictou County -
March 27th 2026



Figure 11: Colchester MRF - March 23rd, 2026



Figure 12: Abandoned Homeless
Encampment, Kentville - March 23rd, 2026



Figure 13: Halifax MRF - March
27th, 2026



Figure 14: Illegal Dump, Shannon
Park Kentville - March 30th 2026



Figure 15: Illegal Dump, Town of Kentville. 150
+ Sharps- Kentville - March 30th 2026



Figure 16: Bag Found in
Construction/Demolition Load, East Hants -
April 28th 2026



Figure 17: Residential Community, Glace Bay - April 1st 2026