

## **Alberta Beverage Container Recycling Corporation and Northern Alberta Institute of Technology Partner in Pursuit of Enhancing Sustainability and Alberta’s Circular Economy**

**Edmonton, Alberta**—With a recycling industry ripe for innovation, the Alberta Beverage Container Recycling Corporation (ABCRC) and the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) are thrilled to announce an exciting partnership to develop best practices for recycling beverage container drink pouches.

As the convener, collaborator, and connector for Alberta’s beverage container recycling sector, ABCRC recovers more than 150,000 different types of regulated, non-refillable beverage containers sold in the province at its recycling processing facilities in Edmonton and Calgary. Its mandate includes identifying end-markets for different beverage container types where the recovered materials can be used most efficiently and effectively recycled.

However, identification often hinges on ABCRC’s understanding of how container materials can be transformed through the recycling process, or at times, the barriers that the material faces. This means the organization frequently steps up and takes the lead in research and innovation to address challenges in the system to facilitate the development of made-in-Alberta solutions.

“As the steward of recyclable non-refillable beverage containers, our ability to innovate and find the most suitable and impactful end-markets for recycled materials is critical,” explained Guy West, President and CEO of ABCRC. “A container type that has always presented challenges in recycling is drink pouches. It’s what has led us to this partnership with NAIT, so we can hopefully identify the best possible futures for these materials.”

Drink pouches are small, single-serving containers made of sandwiched aluminum, plastic and sometimes paper layers, and in 2023, Albertans purchased nearly 15 million drink pouches. While the recovered materials are diverted from landfills through incineration as part of waste-to-energy programs, there is no proper recycling program for the material due to the challenges in separating layers of the different materials. The partnership with NAIT seeks to rectify that.

“We are proud to be able to support Alberta-based sustainability initiatives like this by the Alberta Beverage Container Recycling Corporation,” commented Olle Lagerquist, Associate Vice-President of NAIT’s Industry Solutions. “We know that finding better end-markets for recyclable materials means a stronger circular economy, environmental sustainability, and economic and community benefits. Our research and innovation partnership with ABCRC to better understand this challenging packaging material and develop a made-in-Alberta solution is a testament to the talent, expertise and ingenuity that we have in this province.”

Throughout the three-year \$300,000 partnership funded by ABCRC, NAIT Applied Research will work with ABCRC to examine approaches to separate drink pouch packaging materials (aluminum, plastic, and paper) to identify potential downstream recycling technology advancements and integration into existing plastic or aluminum recycling platforms.

“Now more than ever, recycling isn’t just good for the environment, but for our economy too,” explained West. “Challenges create opportunities to innovate and develop made-in-Alberta solutions. This partnership is a step forward in unlocking future economic gains for an untapped resource and making effective use of the nearly 15 million containers purchased in Alberta.”

**For more information, contact:**

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**About Alberta Beverage Container Recycling Corporation (ABCRC):** As an eco-conscious corporation for more than 25 years, ABCRC has operated under not-for-profit provisions as the agent for beverage manufacturers in Alberta to collect, transport, process and recycle those beverage containers. By working alongside the more than 220 bottle depots in Alberta, they help Albertans recycle more than 2.12 billion containers annually. Visit ABCRC's website [HERE](#).

**About NAIT:** The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) is a leading Canadian polytechnic, delivering education in science, technology and the environment; business; health and skilled trades. With more than 38,000 credit and non-credit students and a 98 per cent employer satisfaction rate, NAIT grads help fuel the economic engine of the province. NAIT also contributes to Alberta's prosperity by helping businesses and communities become more competitive through industry-driven applied research and corporate training. Recognized as one of Alberta's top employers, NAIT provides outstanding returns on investment for its graduates, industry partners, the provincial government and the people of Alberta. Visit NAIT's website [HERE](#).