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Sorters show they can tell recycling from trash

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Those new garbage sorters on the waterfront aren't just a tourist attraction, they really work.

The four-stream solar compactors installed on the Halifax waterfront last summer as part of a pilot project were made permanent because of their tremendous success: 95 per cent of beverage containers were sorted correctly and diverted from landfills.

Similar pilot projects in Ontario and Quebec boasted results of approximately 80 per cent.

The average diversion rate for all four streams in the Halifax project was 83 per cent.

At a press conference Thursday, Colin MacLean, president and CEO of Waterfront Development Corporation, said the solar compactors received quite a bit of attention this summer.

"Tourists, whether they're from a cruise ship or otherwise, liked to stand in front of them to get their photos taken," he said.

John Challinor, of Nestle Waters, which helped pay for the \$100,000 pilot project, said the organic recycling numbers weren't as impressive.

About half of all waste on the waterfront is organic, but only 49 per cent of it was sorted correctly.

Challinor said he thinks that's because 25 to 30 per cent of the traffic on the waterfront consists of tourists, and organic recycling is relatively uncommon.

He added they had a meeting scheduled Thursday with Environment Minister Sterling Belliveau and HRM staff to discuss the project.