

Meeting Notes

Recycling Stakeholders

June 6, 2018

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Meeting Objectives

- To share information about the impacts of National Sword on stakeholders across Washington
- Share next steps that groups are taking

General Notes from the Discussion

- **Sign up for the [ListServ](#)** to continue to receive information about future meetings and work. There have been some issues with the listserv so Alli will also keep an interested parties list.
- **Access meeting notes and presentations [here](#).**
- It was suggested that Ecology develop a steering committee of industry and government leaders (counties/cities/UTC/Commerce/Ecology). This group can take charge of looking at near and long term planning. Ecology had already discussed this internally and committed to forming a steering committee. Sub-committees or workgroups may be formed out of the initial committee.
- Update from WRRRA: The Chinese markets continue to become more restrictive. The effects will be felt for a long time. Worldwide there is a glut of unmarketable recyclable products. It is difficult to find alternative markets overseas. The logistics of shipping containers further increase the difficulty of moving materials, because the materials are no longer being backhauled to China and instead have to divert them to India or other destinations. This results in a shortage of available shipping containers.
- Impacts for materials are being felt beyond just curbside collection, even for materials from source separated drop boxes which are cleaner. Some counties report they are able to move high quality source separated commodities such as aluminum and PET bottles but overall the evaporation of markets has affected all commodities.
- Markets are even more challenging for materials from rural markets. The transportation costs to either a MRF or mills increase costs especially in Eastern Washington.

- Island County reported that Recology took their source-separated plastics bales of 1's and 2's. For mixed paper, Fibers International was charging the county to take the material but Recology is taking the material at no cost. Island County is not making money from the material but Recology has been able to move the bales off the island to domestic outlets.
- Lincoln County reported they are moving source separated materials but it is hard because the price is so low. They are stockpiling some material.
- Klickitat County uses Republic services. All mixed paper and plastic has been going to the landfill. They are messaging that uncontaminated materials are going to markets but they have not been able to get contamination low enough to be marketable. They are working on developing anti-contamination survey and messaging. They'll start with a survey sent out to certain routes of curbside recycling, asking residents to identify certain contaminants. Then they will target a certain contaminant. Door-to-door outreach and mailers, and extra cart tagging out on the route will follow this. Another survey and another round of extra cart checks to see if it was effective will follow this up. They plan to target one material at a time for a month or so, and then move on to next material. Their system is commingled except for glass, which is only collected at transfer stations.
- King County reported on their Responsible Recycling Task Force. They have held two meetings and are working on a communication plan. The plan will mostly explain China's import policies and what they mean to our systems.
- King County worked with some graduate students to identify all paper mills in the state (and into Oregon). They identified all paper mills in the region and which were which are taking any post-consumer fiber, requirements to take that material, and their plans of future expansion to take more paper. Very few are taking anything other than OCC. Just a couple would take mixed waste paper, and NOT from commingled. They don't want ANY glass. One of the problems with taking post-consumer is the ink contains PCBs and the effluent from paper mills has strict requirement to keep PCBs low. If there is too much post-consumer fiber, then it will exceed the limits in the effluent. We need to look at PCBs in inks so it won't impact recyclability. Lisa Sepanski is working with WSRA to make a WRED event about paper mills and the different kinds and issues (tissue mill vs OCC mill, etc.).
- Tacoma is making a presentation to their city council. They are considering removing marginal materials such as plastic bags and cartons from their acceptance lists.
- MRFs are continuing to make progress toward cleaner bales as they add people to the sort lines and slow the belts. Historically paper has been the most valuable commodity as it make up the largest percentage of material collected. In the current market, they are paying people to take paper.
- There are reports of customer confusion and fears of being penalized if they put materials in the wrong bin. There needs to be emphasis on the message of "When in doubt, throw it out." We need to switch how we think of our programs and focus on quality rather than quantity. This may mean removing materials from the bins.
- There needs to be increased messaging on reducing food-contaminated items in collection. How clean does it need to be to be placed in the bin? What are the life-

cycle costs or greenhouse gas implications of cleaning materials? Materials must be clean to be recycled. If people are going to recycle, they need to recycle right. If they don't want to take the time then they should not recycle.

- There is a need to focus on level of service and size of both the garbage and recycling carts. This is true for both single and multifamily residences.
- Unless a material is marketable it is not recyclable. Otherwise, it's just a long way to pollution or long way to a landfill. It is also expensive. At this point, the landfill becomes the obvious choice when we make recycling so expensive.
- There is a request for Ecology to supply recycling reports on a timelier basis. When they are 2-3 years old, they are not useful.
- It was requested that Ecology provide information about who is disposing of how much material in a similar fashion to what Oregon DEQ is doing. Ecology said they do not have the regulatory authority to collect those numbers but local governments may through their contracts. King County reported their task force is looking at how they might put that in place if they grant variances and permission for disposal of materials that were collected with intent to recycle, but now must be landfilled.
- There was a call for the state to take leadership on the development of domestic markets.
- There was a request to provide more information at the next meeting on the new solid waste determination section 021 of WAC 173-350. Alli said she will get this information.
- The Carton Council mentioned that cartons have value but they just need to be sorted. They have resources to help MRFs adapt technology to sort these materials into grade 52 bales. They really do not want cartons removed from too many lists.
- A number of participants expressed interest in more meetings. Ecology will continue to organize monthly meetings to facilitate information sharing between interested stakeholders.
- Next Meetings:
 - Thursday July 19: 1:00-3:00 p.m.
 - Wednesday August 15: 1:00-3:00 p.m.