

# Recycling Stakeholders Meeting Notes

## April 2, 2019

### Welcome & Introductions – Heather Church, Ecology

Heather reviewed the agenda and shared information about the impacts of changing recycling markets.

### Update on current status of recycling/plastics bills in the 2019 legislative session – Julie Robertson, Ecology

Julie provided a summary of the following bills:

[E2SHB 1114](#) Reducing the wasting of food in order to fight hunger and reduce environmental impacts. Establishes a goal for the state to reduce by 50% the amount of food waste generated annually by 2030.

[E2SHB 1543 AMS ENET](#) Concerning sustainable recycling. Creates a Recycling Development Center within Ecology. Ecology will work with Commerce on recycling market research development. Ecology will create a statewide recycling contamination reduction and outreach plan (CROP). Local jurisdictions will need to create their own CROP or adopt the state CROP.

[ESHB 1569](#) Product degradability. Establishes labeling requirements for compostable products. The bill prohibits the sale of packaging with false or misleading terms and provides identity requirements for compostable film bags.

[SHB 1652](#) Paint stewardship. Requires producers of architectural paint selling in or into WA to participate in an approved paint stewardship plan. Prohibits a producer or retailer of paint from selling or offering for sale architectural paint unless the producer or brand of paint is participating in a stewardship plan.

[ESSB 5323](#) Prohibits single-use plastic bags. Prohibits a retail establishment from providing a customer a single-use plastic carryout bag, a paper carryout bag, or reusable carryout bag made of film plastic that does not meet recycled content requirements. Sets an 8-cent pass-through charge for every recycled content paper carryout bag of a certain size.

[E2SSB 5397 AMH ENVI](#) Management of plastic packaging. Requires a third-party study and recommendations on reducing plastic packaging waste. Plastic packaging producers are encouraged to consider environmental impacts of the design and management of their packaging.

Question: Do all these bills look like they will be approved by legislature? They are still alive, but will need to wait and see. The next cutoff is April 3<sup>rd</sup> for bills to get out of committee. So far, progress seems good.

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### Update on Ecology's efforts – Heather Church, Ecology

Recycling Steering Committee Update:

The Committee has identified 4 issues in their Charter to address and guide the direction of the group and their decision making:

1. Contamination
2. Lack of Markets
3. Recycling is Not Free
4. Lack of Knowledge about the Realities of Recycling

With these key issues in mind, the group is working to develop recommendations that can be widely applied throughout Washington State. They are also diving into further understanding the application and use of Life Cycle Assessments and possible new technologies. Subcommittees within this group are working on solidifying definitions such as Contamination and Responsible Recycling. A document is currently in its draft stages that will identify various materials (such as glass, aseptic cartons, plastics 3-7) and assess these materials' challenges and opportunities in the recycling system from the perspectives of: Access, Sortation, Reprocessing, End Markets, and Volume.

Outreach and Education Campaign with C+C:

A brief overview was given for the first phase. More phases depend on future funding availability. Ecology and C+C is not soliciting feedback at this time, but questions/concerns can be emailed to Heather. The focus is on the "Empty, Clean, & Dry" campaign. Ecology is building off of King County's Recycle Right campaign, but with emphasis on statewide application for varied demographics. The goal is to create an awareness by going for broad and low hanging fruit to overcome barriers to achieve a desired behavior. A slide was reviewed to demonstrate materials that are currently in development stages. The audience focus will be on statewide residents with more focus outside of King County. Languages are primarily English and Spanish. A map was reviewed showing radio, TV, and online market coverage. Online coverage will be posted on Facebook, Instagram and other social media. The target demographic is women ages 25-64. Advertising will be from May 27-June 16. C+C will develop customizable toolkits for local municipalities. Materials will be ready in June. Slides will be made available.

### **Presentation: "Recycling: Facing the Issues at Hand, the Forces that Be, and taking a Regenerative Approach"- Michael Timpane, Resource Recycling Systems**

Overview: Michael Timpane has been in the recycling industry since 1975. He works across the entire value chain, from federal to state to local institutions, CPG brands and packaging manufacturers, material manufacturers and mills, equipment providers, and the material recovery facility community.

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Commodities are at their lowest levels since the 1993 and OCC is at a 20-year nadir. Michael discussed current trends in recycling and commodity markets, and its implications to policy and application, especially in the PNW but relevant nationally. Topics included changing economics of recycling, why residential recycling is suffering from poor use of language, business model conflicts and inherent risks, barriers to further diversion, and the future of recovery practices (e.g. automation and implications surrounding millennial workforce preferences). An overview was given of current arguments in sustainable materials management, and hope at the end of the tunnel of negative indicators in the business. Once painful choices are made, investment will increase in recycling infrastructure.

There is confusion about the differences between the MRF cleaning service and scrap business model. Supply and demand in US single stream system is rarely in or above equilibrium. In the current bust, 20% of MRFs might fail. Constant cash flow is needed due to high operating costs vs. revenue. MRF costs continue to rise. The line needs to slow down to meet export quality standards. There is low labor availability and increasingly complex MRF systems which are aging. Single stream contamination has gone up. It is uncertain whether this is due to more non-recyclables, because they are cheaper to send to a landfill rather than sort, or there are better sorting standards. Predictions on current situation: MRF processing fees must rise with rising costs in addition to revenue increase. Single stream recycling service is popular in general, and is inexpensive.

### Questions

- Can mixed waste paper be used as fuel for energy? Yes, but the bigger question is whether it is economic. It makes good pellets if it's clean enough. There are very few energy companies who will take mixed waste pellets because of chlorine. The processing cost is too high to allow the revenue to work in most cases. Is part of the issue due to declining use of paper and fiber? Newspaper is now 75% of the physical size and half the weight it used to be. The trend is not stopping, and the decline long-term.
- Why is wet cardboard/paper less useable? There is a specification on moisture that is less than 10%, and is discounted when it's over that percent. It tends to cause issues overseas and degrade quickly, which makes it hard to handle on the other end. Dry and clean is easier to price, manage, and doesn't degrade. A pulp MRF could use wet paper if it's clean, but it may not be economical.
- What steps would PNW need to make glass recycling economical? It depends. MRFs would have to source separate, and it could be economical as a source separated commodity. However, no material is economical at the curb.

Wrap-Up/Next Steps: Heather will ask for agenda topics and send slides. Please contact her with questions. Michael will be at the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries (ISRI) Convention from April 6-11 and welcomed attendees to reach out to him. He encouraged participants to read the articles at the Resource Recycling Systems at [www.rrs.com](http://www.rrs.com).