

**Washington State Department of Ecology, Recycling Steering Committee (RSC)****Meeting Summary****Date:** December 18, 2018**Time:** 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.**Location:** Bunzl Distributing 4501 W Valley Highway E, Building #A, Sumner, WA 98390

Attendees: Ron Jones- WSRA; Shannon McClelland- Association of Washington Cities; Kevin Kelly- Recology; Nina Goodrich- Sustainable Packaging Coalition; Dylan de Thomas- The Recycling Partnership; Ester Baumier- Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department; Laurie Davies- WA State Dept. of Ecology; Alli Kingfisher –WA State Dept. of Ecology; Annie Kilburg – Triangle Associates; Brian Young- WA Dept. of Commerce; Brad Louvaas- Washington Refuse and Recycling Association; Lisa Sepanski- King County; Dave Claugus- Pioneer Recycling; Jan Gee- Washington Food Industry; Angela Fritz- WA State Dept. of Ecology; Lacy Kooiman- WA State Dept. of Ecology; Heather Church- WA State Dept. of Ecology

Attending via Phone: Andy Hackman- Ameripen; Steve Wulf- Sunshine Disposal; Rory Wintersteen- Lincoln County; Heather Trim- Zero Waste Washington

**Welcome and Introductions: 9:15 a.m.**

Annie Killburg started the meeting by welcoming attendees, conducting a brief round robin of introductions, and review of agenda items and meeting documents (agenda, draft charter, contamination definition and policy statement, accepted materials table, glossary of terms). On behalf of Ecology and Triangle Associates, Annie extended apologies for the misinformation concerning the calendar invite which caused confusion in regards to start time for the meeting on 12/18/2018.

Annie clarified that during the “Begin Developing Contamination Actions” portion of the agenda, attendees were to write out actions that are possible for the 2019 Legislative session keeping in mind our definition of contamination. Asked for question and concerns- none given.

Annie briefly overviewed ground rules: balance of speaking time; focus on interests instead of positions; engage in respectful and constructive dialogue; avoid assumptions and ask clarifying questions; no cell phones.

**Review and Finalize Charter: 9:35 a.m.**

Alli reviewed the Charter and changes made to document as per suggestions from group. Discussion and live editing document proceeded until the following changes were made:

Presented:

3. Recycling is not a free public service. In many cases, billing for waste collection services is bundled under one charge, giving the public the perception that they are only paying for garbage collection and recycling is a free service. However, revenue from the sale of recyclables typically does not offset the costs of collecting, processing, and transporting the recyclable materials. Of all materials collected through curbside recycling programs, only 55% have a positive market value. The 55% of the material stream with positive economic value contributes to 93% of the greenhouse gas emission reductions associated with recycling. The 45% of the recycling stream with a negative economic value contributes only 3% of the greenhouse gas emission reductions from recycling.

**Commented [KA(1):** Alternate suggestion: Recycling doesn't pay for itself and doesn't offer significant environmental benefits from a life-cycle perspective in some cases.

**Commented [RW2]:** See attached slides from Susan Robinson, Waste Management Federal Public Affairs Director, presented to House Environment Committee on 12/3/18.

Modified to:

3. Recycling is not free: The revenue from the sale of recyclable commodities does not typically fund the cost of collecting, transporting, and processing recyclable materials. Just as disposal costs money, so does recycling. Responsible recycling requires investment.

As discussed by group, changes were made to condense/clarify language and make problem statement applicable to RSC over a longer range of time without need for updates or amendments. Group determined that the term “responsible recycling” needs defining and to be added to Glossary of Terms. It was proposed that Kevin Kelly define this term, as he originally came up with phrasing.

Kevin’s beginning definition: Responsible recycling means a method of recycling that is done in a way that reduces contamination and contributes to positive environmental benefits while done in such a way that improves or contributes to worker safety.

Members of RSC requested definition of “recycling” to clarify misperception. Group agreed the definition of recycling is a misperception and needs to be clarified. Alli Kingfisher read aloud WAC 173-350-100 definition of Recycling:

**"Recycling"** means transforming or remanufacturing waste materials into usable or marketable materials for use other than landfill disposal or incineration. Recycling includes processing waste materials to produce tangible commodities.

<https://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=173-350-100>

Bullet #4 (Lack of Public Knowledge) was also modified through group input and revisions from Alli, Annie, and Dylan during lunch break as seen below:

Presented:

4. Lack of public knowledge. The majority of the public does not understand the realities of the recycling industry. This includes addressing the economics of recycling, the environmental benefits, the recycling system and process, and how they can improve the incoming feedstock.

Modified to:

4. Lack of knowledge about the realities of recycling: Billing for recycling services is often bundled into waste collection costs which creates the impression that recycling is free; there is confusion about what can be recycled; that recycling all curbside materials do not have the same environmental benefits; and there is a lack of public trust that collected materials are in fact being recycled.

#### Review and Confirm Charter Goals and Objectives

Alli began discussion on removing “social” from Goals and Objectives bullet #3. After group discussion suggesting remove social and replace with “human health” or “public health”, Shannon recommended removing the bullet entirely. Group had unanimous consensus to remove entire bullet from Goals and Objectives.

#### Contamination Definition: 11:25 a.m.

Alli began discussion with why we have defined contamination, how this draft was formed, and what documents have been consulted to make sure there were no pre-existing definitions. She informed the group that what she has drawn up is a 'straw dog' and would like the group's input and revision. Contamination definition was read through with the group and revised through live edit.

#### Update on Ecology Education and Outreach RFP

Alli gave 3 minute update on RFP. A bidder has been selected, but due to protocol and paperwork, she could not announce the Apparent Successful Bidder at that time. She will send out email to group when announcement has been made. Alli made note that it will be a focus in the scope of work to work with involved stakeholders (RSC) to approve of messages created and put forth. Shannon asked for RFP document to be sent to the group. Alli will email to RSC members.

#### Remaining Contamination Policy Statement: 12:45 p.m.

Annie discusses the Contamination Policy Statement, second section on Contamination Document. Group continues to revise through live edit. Group finished with general consensus on final draft of entire Contamination document.

#### Begin Developing Contamination Actions: 1:00 p.m.

Diving into this discussion, Annie suggested instead of breaking out onto small groups, the group stayed whole to go through action items in list. The group was smaller than last time and staying whole allowed for provide ease of presenting and time efficiency. RSC agreed.

RSC started with #1 Standardized List: What are the immediate actions that could be part of this group's efforts? What rises to the top? What are you hoping to achieve from those actions?

Lisa suggested a round robin approach for members to voice opinions on the standardized list; Annie agreed and asked for individuals to include "why" and the challenges/benefits each saw for the list.

#### Major concerns regarding a standardized list:

- Standardized list would discourage investment in recycling technology; discourage new markets from establishing and growing locally
- Limiting the ability to expand lists in the future if/when markets become available
- Will the public actually respond to it?
- Do we have data that a resetting of the acceptable list will actually reduce contamination in the waste stream?
- Would it remain flexible but with concise communication for public understanding?
- Allow adaptation to accommodate for evolution of the waste stream
- How do we get people to keep out the items that will contaminate the stream if they are still on the accepted list?
- Producers/brands will continue to manufacture products that cannot be recycled and will have no sustainable outlet, conversation/change needed

#### Support for a standardized list:

- Markets accepting sorted recyclable materials aren't likely to change in the near future (0-2 years)
- "Accepted materials table" shows commonalities on most materials accepted with a few discrepancies (glass, plastics #3-7, and cartons); recognizes what is currently accepted

- Supports the K.I.S.S. (Keep it simple, stupid) model of telling public how to recycle
- Will have positive economic value over time by recycling materials that have available markets

**Alternative suggestions in place of a standardized list:**

- 'No-Go List'; a list of what not to recycle rather than what only to recycle
- Statewide standardized outreach list; consistent outreach plan focusing on common materials to/not to recycle
- Adopt a K.I.S.S. (Keep it simple, stupid) model for outreach and education of what not to recycle to reduce contamination

**Short Term Actions: 2:07 p.m.**

Because of synergy concerning the idea of creating a "what not to put in the bin" list, Annie asked group to create list of what could be on a statewide list:

- Styrofoam
- Plastic bags and film
- Food waste
- Diapers
- Bullets
- Textiles
- Tanglers (Christmas lights, hoses, rope, extension cords, fishing lines)

Conversation ensued regarding items that are currently on communities' lists that perhaps should not be (such as bags and film), and whether these items currently have or will have markets in the near future. Concern about whether lists (standardized or otherwise) would successfully combat contamination was widely expressed. Common concern: "Items not on a standardized list will still end up in the recycling stream." The idea of creating disincentives for recycling incorrectly/ putting contaminants into the recycling stream was mentioned.

Annie asked if there was agreement on whether the group felt that focusing on or implementing a "yes/no" list or a standardized list would be a productive path forward. No agreement from group. Alli asked if a list the wrong approach- Should another method be considered. Group expressed the need for education and outreach concerning recycling, but did not have general consensus as to whether this method should be a focus for next meeting.

Annie noted that this discussion would be tabled for the next meeting and that we were out of time. Alli requested RSC members to email her a list of what to focus on for next meeting.

Meeting Adjourned: 3:03 p.m.