

**SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**\*\* MEETING SUMMARY \*\***  
**May 26, 2020**

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***Call to Order & Introductions – Troy Lautenbach***

Troy Lautenbach, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:31 A.M. The January 22, 2020 meeting notes were not reviewed and introductions were skipped due to time constraints.

***Budget/Legislative Update - Laurie Davies***

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Several pieces of legislation passed, but were vetoed in response to COVID-19. The recycled content bill passed, but was vetoed along with funding. Almost \$9 million was added to the Local Solid Waste Financial Assistance (LSWFA) operating budget as a technical fix, and was also vetoed. The plastic bag ban passed intact and was funded. Shannon Jones will lead implementation as the Westside Coordinator. The state has a hole in the budget. The Office of Financial Management (OFM) and the legislature have not called a session. The rumor is that they are waiting on the June 17<sup>th</sup> forecast. A special session is expected after the forecast and budget reduction exercises.

We are still implementing the budget we were given. Nine million of LSWFA funding was vetoed. We are trying to protect the additional Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Litter Control Account (WRRLCA) money that was not vetoed, and spend it as directed per the statute. We are in the process of putting together agency request legislation proposals. SWM put forward to develop bill language to repeal the plastics labeling as required in RCW 70.95F. The proposal is to remove chasing triangles and the resin type used. Comments from stakeholders are due by May 29. California removed part of their labeling law, and other states are looking at similar actions. Question: What is logic behind removing triangle labeling? People think it is recyclable, when in fact lower quality resins are not and are contaminating the waste stream. The idea is to eliminate confusion.

The Governor implemented a hiring and contract freeze when he signed the budget in April. This hiring freeze was a big hit to the Solid Waste Management (SWM) program, and several positions in the hiring process are now frozen. We were able to hire a new Environmental Planner for the Recycling Development Center. Alli Kingfisher was hired as the Plastics Lead and was also doing statewide recycling until Dan Weston was hired as her replacement. We were not able to hire his data position due to the freeze, and are working to keep data moving forward. Stacy Callaway who was the Lead Local Government Planner working on the Contamination Reduction and Outreach Plan (CROP), left the program in March and went to Hazardous Waste & Toxics Reduction (HWTR) program. Peter Guttchen was hired to fill the position and work on the CROP due by July 1. Peter Christiansen, Northwest Regional Office (NWRO) Section Manager, is retiring this week. We could not recruit his position before the freeze. Steven Williams, Ecology Youth Corps (EYC) Coordinator is filling in as the interim Section Manager. Dan Skillman returned to Ecology from the City of Bellingham, and is filling in as the EYC Coordinator. Chipper Hervieux, Statewide Resources Section (SRS) Manager is retiring at the end of the week. Her position is also on hold due to the freeze. Blake Nelson, SRS Grants, Litter, & Outreach (GLO) Unit Supervisor, is filling in as the interim SRS Manager. He worked with HWTR and administered grants for Puget Sound Cleanup. Kelsey Dunne, who manages the Waste Reduction & Recycling Education (WRRED) grants, a non-profit grant program under WRRLCA, is filling in as the interim SRS GLO Unit Supervisor.

Several contracts that were in process are frozen: The Recycle Right Campaign, and three litter contracts: 1) prevention campaign, 2) hotline, and 3) reporting app. The waste characterization study is moving forward with Cascadia. We are pursuing options to move forward with the other contracts.

### ***COVID Response & Impacts***

#### ***Washington Refuse & Recycling Association (WRRRA) – Brad Lovaas***

The solid waste industry is classified as essential, as recognized in 1961 for collection purposes. Many ground zero facilities like public health districts are being serviced. Questions about COVID on surfaces was a concern. The Washington Refuse & Recycling Association represents eight materials recovery facilities that have remained open. The transportation and supply chain were upset due to markets and demand going down. The industry is very resilient and pivoted very quickly. The biggest issue was keeping employees safe (administration and call centers are working remotely). Some operations were modified. Drivers were sent out remotely without team meetings. Vacations were put on hold. Commercial, industrial, and construction accounts are down. Changes as a result of people being at home include an increase in residential garbage, recycling and yard waste, and contamination in food containers. Service levels remain unchanged. Seasonal communities like Long Beach and Chelan saw people sheltering there. The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission regulatory structure was reaffirmed by China Sword and COVID-19. There were 128 rate cases since January 2019. Cities that provide their own collection are experiencing the same COVID-19 effects as our companies. They recently amended their lists and rate structures. Most contract cities have been accommodative. Commercial subsidizes residential, and cities will feel the impact. It is uncertain how many businesses will come back, if at all.

#### ***Thurston County Public Health – Art Starry***

An email survey was sent to local health jurisdictions (LHJs) with six questions. There was a low response rate of 40%, possibly due to COVID. LHJ capacity varies from 0-100% of normal. Most focus on high priority activities, complaint investigations, and compliance work that can be done safely. Staff are telecommuting as much as possible. Some are doing ok and some are not so well. One said about half their time was spent on COVID in the beginning, and now it is less. There are concerns about future rebounds and more outbreaks. The financial impacts of COVID on the economy and associated impacts on local government and LHJs include reduced local revenue, staff reductions, program reductions, facilities decline, increased illegal dumping and illicit activities, and impacts on Model Toxics Control Account (MTCA) and LSWFA funding.

#### ***US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Domenic Calabro***

Not many public inquiries were received at the regional office. A link to the national EPA is included in the meeting slides. A state agencies call was held with Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. A surplus food project was discussed. EPA has been stressing safe recycling and proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) disposal to follow local hauler and Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines. EPA created videos that serve as Public Service Announcements (PSAs) about keeping PPE out of recycling bins. The main focus is to ensure adequate supply of stock. More products are being delivered and more material is being generated due to people staying at home. Many businesses can't recycle due to closure or limited operations. Households are encouraged to recycle more, and correctly (only recycle materials currently

accepted), and follow the Empty Clean and Dry guidelines. Video links to Recycling during COVID 19 are posted on the EPA website.

There was a call last week with states in the region. Oregon had self-haul issues due to closure of transfer stations, but closures are easing up a bit. A few times large amounts of PPE were dropped at transfer stations from hospitals, and they are working on coordination. Staff from Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) are telecommuting until mid June and plan to phase back in with safety guidelines. All Idaho employees are preparing for furloughs. Oregon DEQ is looking at regional relief for recyclables due to lack of haulers. Many reusable items are going to the landfill due to people being at home and doing spring cleaning projects. Yard waste has increased. Paint and home improvement stores are still open and recycling. Medical waste is either steady or down due to elective procedures being put on hold. Stores are still open to collect for bottle bill requirements. Oregon DEQ is still open, but all staff are encouraged to telecommute. The government has asked agencies for ideas to cut 8% across the state. The Northwest Wave Initiative where stakeholders collaborate to address climate change and social justice had just started. They pivoted after the pandemic to develop a food box project with a goal of increasing food recovery from regional producers who lost business, to make it accessible to community members in need. The project will launch in June in Oregon and Washington. Stakeholders will provide volunteer support, and partner with Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians and the Food Truck Association. EPA Region 10 is closed and has been telecommuting since March. They start the federal phase 1 at the end of the week, followed by a phased return to work. Staff will probably work remotely through July.

#### ***Utilities and Transportation Commission – Mike Young***

UTC is very busy with other transportation industries. Most companies will waive late fees and are working out payment plans with customers that are struggling to pay. No consumer complaints about disconnecting service have been received so far. The commissioners decided to implement two general rate increases now instead of waiting to collect lost revenue. The increases were both initiated prior to COVID. Some companies have chosen to delay. There are discussions with companies about deferring additional costs including wage incentives, debt collection, and equipment due to COVID. Some utility companies have filed petitions for recovery of those costs. No decisions have been made on the petitions. The commissioners are waiting to see what economic recovery looks like. Otherwise, staff are working from home. Public meetings are being held via Skype, and business is continuing as usual.

#### ***Department of Ecology – Chuck Matthews***

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Key impacts to the SWM program were shared. There were reports of illegal dumping over the past few weeks due to self-haul restrictions. The spills program has been active and responding to hazardous materials spills. The message is to report hazardous materials through the usual channels in the spills program. Ecology Youth Corps cancelled the 14-17 year old crews due to school closures and lack of ability to recruit. The program is starting with adult crews (some started last week, some will start this week). Crews are very small with social distancing and PPE. There were numerous solid waste facility closures in the first few weeks of the stay at home order, resulting in limited access to self-haul services. People were encouraged to hold on to recyclables and e-waste, and to confirm if facilities were open before making trips. Most municipal disposal facilities returned to normal operations with COVID-19 safety precautions in place. FAQs were developed and posted. A focus was to encourage customers to delay trips where possible. There was a significant disruption with e-Waste and mercury lights product

stewardship programs, due to closure of many businesses identified as collection points for the programs. Third party audits of the product stewardship programs, required by statute, were delayed until they can be done in-person. Two medical waste treatment facilities in the state rely on autoclaves. Stericycle saw a 15% decrease in waste handled due to elective surgeries and other procedures being postponed. Waste Management initially reported a 40% increase in materials, but there was a lot of confusion by generators about how to manage used PPE. Pressure eased once clearer guidelines from local health were given. Biosolids program activities continued, since biosolids management is viewed as an extension of wastewater treatment activities and was deemed an “essential function” by the Governor’s Office. The same is true for septage. Waste tires amnesty events around the State were cancelled for June due to COVID and will be scheduled when it’s safer. Three events were suspended/postponed. Contracted tire pile cleanups continue since distancing is relatively easy and staff needs are small. A question was asked about the CDC statement that surfaces are not considered as high risk as respirators, and if it is anticipated that will help open things up. Department of Health (DOH) is the agency that handles this issue. Chuck is working with them on guidance and anticipates more questions. The state is following the Governor’s phased plan (expected to expire on the 31st). Some counties will go into phase 2 earlier. Some applied for approval and some were directly approved. A question was asked if there are concerns about CDC reports of increased rat infestations. No concerns yet, but this will be added to the public comments.

### ***Ecology Update***

#### ***Recycling Steering Committee & Recycle Right Campaign – Dan Weston***

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#### ***Recycling Steering Committee***

Since the update last October, the committee had a brainstorming exercise to envision the future of the group. A recommendations document was created to address the full recycling system spectrum, and subgroups were formed to address specific topics. The February meeting was cancelled due to legislative session, but work on the recycling document continued. Due to COVID complications, the April meeting was done online and the deadline to complete the recycling document was extended until April 30<sup>th</sup>. Due to technical issues with the April 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, a special half-hour meeting was held on April 23<sup>rd</sup> to make up the time. There were concerns that COVID was taking up a lot of time, and it wasn’t possible to prioritize working on the document. There was also difficulty having the discussion virtually. The document sharing system wasn’t working due to public SharePoint technical issues, so the group decided to put the document on hold until it is clear when they can meet in person. It will be at least six months since the group met, and another decision will need to be made on the path forward. Since the group is still assembled, a consultative webinar was held last week with Peter Guttchen on the CROP outline and ideas. The committee had a chance to provide feedback. Similar webinars may be held in the future if the group is unable to meet in person. If the group thinks there is a project of value, another webinar will be held to discuss those projects. The group is in hold status otherwise. The purpose and role of the committee started as a larger stakeholder group, then narrowed into a smaller group for more focused work. The vision is to review and develop actions to revamp the state’s recycling system and provide guidance. The intention was to focus on the commingled recycling stream and respond to changes in the market after China Sword.

### ***Recycle Right Campaign***

The contract is frozen. The campaign would have three parts: 1) reinforce and build on the first campaign and continue Empty Clean & Dry messaging; 2) targeted “don’t bag your recyclables” messaging on plastic bags and film (based on survey results from the first campaign that found 20% were bagging); and 3) ask contractor to develop new messaging on wish recycling, when in doubt throw it out, waste reduction, and reuse.

### ***Recycling Development Center - Kara Steward & Tina Schaefer***

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**Contact Tina:** Office 360-407-7684, Cell 360-819-6659, [tina.schaefer@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:tina.schaefer@ecy.wa.gov)

The team has more than doubled in size. Elaine Taylor was hired as the Administrative Assistant and Tina Schaefer is the new Planner. Tina provided an update of the center’s activities. Under RCW 70.370, the center was created in 2019. Work is completed by Ecology staff in partnership with the Department of Commerce. Brian Young is the Commerce lead, he is the Clean Technology Sector Lead in the Office of Economic Development and Competitiveness. The 14 member advisory board was appointed in October 2019. The Utilities and Transportation Commission is a nonvoting member of the board. The board includes representatives from one city, two counties, one public interest group, three public research institutions, and seven private sector companies. Members are listed on the meeting slides and on the center’s website. Members serve two to three year terms. Scott Morgan, Evergreen State College, and Karl Englund, Washington State University, were selected as Chair/Co-Chair. In 2020, the board scheduled quarterly meetings in January, April, July, and October. These meetings are open to the public. The January meeting resulted in 200 ideas for Center work, and are listed in the meeting notes. Those ideas were used to develop a first draft work plan (April 2020) that is being revised based on board member comments. A subcommittee is working on center goals and metrics. The revised draft work plan will be shared at the July board meeting. Center work is outlined in four areas: 1) partnerships, outreach, and sharing info; 2) business assistance and development, market analysis, and funding; 3) research on waste, recycling, policy and economics, and 4) technology, discussions, evaluations, and investment. Commerce is currently providing their services, working on research looking into the waste stream, supply chain, and unmet capital for glass recycling. Statutory deliverables are broadly called out in the proposed legislation, research/technologies, obtaining grant funding, and reporting to the legislature once per biennium (report due this fall). Information is shared on a regular basis through the email list. Visit the [Recycling Development Center website](#) for meeting notes and more info, or contact Kara and Tina with questions.

### ***Plastic Packaging – Alli Kingfisher***

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The study is moving along despite COVID challenges, and is close to being on schedule. The scope of work is divided into 5 different tasks. 1) assess current plastic packaging management system; 2) assess business use of recycled content in Washington; 3) research global policy and technology options for managing packaging; 4) conduct stakeholder consultation; and 5) develop recommendations to meet 2025 plastic reduction goals. The timeline was reviewed (see meeting slides). The final draft recommendations will be moved out two weeks due to COVID impacts. Task 3 deliverables are existing policy and technology options, costs and savings of existing stewardship programs, and databases to use in developing a state program. The Executive Summary is posted on the [Plastics Packaging Study Stakeholder Group](#) website, and the SWAC was encouraged to review it. Contact Alli with any questions.

***Plastic Bags – Shannon Jones***

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SB5323 takes effect January 1, 2021. The implementation timeline is divided into 6 phases as outlined in the meeting slides. The timeline is currently in the first phase of stakeholder collaboration. This phase includes gathering resources from existing ordinances, compiling a list of “gateway” stakeholders, setting up web resources (ListServ, Ecology web page, and an Easy View page), and collaborating with the Ecology communications team. The main goals are 1) to reduce marine plastic pollution, litter, and waste; 2) reduce contamination in commingled recycling; 2) promote re-use; 4) create consistent policy and enforcement statewide; and 5) invest in increased paper manufacturing. Items not included in the ban are 1) bags used in-store for bulk items; 2) newspaper/dry-cleaning/door-hanger bags; 3) bags sold in packages containing multiple bags (garbage, pet waste); and 4) bags used to wrap items for sanitation or safety purposes. Detail on collaboration with key stakeholders, education and outreach, enforcement, strategy, and COVID impacts were reviewed. Contact Shannon for more information and to join the ListServ.

***Local Solid Waste Financial Assistance (LSWFA) Grants Information – Tami Ramsey***

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There was not much to report on CLCP and PPG. Reach out to Tami or Kelsey with questions. WRRED received an additional \$250,000 in a second round of funding, good for one year (effective dates are 7/1/20 – 6/30/21). The grant is open to local governments and non-profit organizations. The same scoring criteria will be used this round. The final funding list is anticipated to be announced in mid-June. There were several stops and starts with LSWFA funding that fell through. The current guidelines were revised to include homeless encampment response this biennium, but there is no new money. Agreements can be amended before October. Contact your grant manager for assistance. There is a new eSignature process for grants, and digital signatures are acceptable until further notice. Recipients must attach one of two acceptable types of eSignatures. Step-by-step instructions are available if you need them. Contact Tami or your regional grant manager for assistance. If you are struggling to implement current scopes of work or spend existing budgets due to COVID impacts, contact the grant managers for guidance.

***Contamination Reduction Outreach Plans (CROPs) – Peter Guttchen***

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The same legislation that created the Recycling Development Center also required Ecology to create a CROP by this July. The CROP is not just an outreach plan. We are looking at various strategies to reduce contamination. Counties with a population of over 25,000 are required to prepare a CROP by July 2021. The law allows counties to incorporate the state plan in lieu of developing their own plan. Ecology plans to create uniform standards. All the work is in line with other SWM programs and grant funds are prioritized to assist with the work. The focus is on best management practices for contamination reduction. Ecology is in the process of creating a step-by-step guide for local governments to build on this content in their local plans. Non-traditional streams are not planned for the CROP. The focus will be mostly on household contamination, but will address system-wide reduction at MRFs. The timeline is aggressive. The deadlines outlined on the meeting slides may not be met, but we are doing our best. The goal is still to have a state CROP published by July 1, 2020 and provide technical assistance to local governments. Contact Peter if you are interested in learning more. There is also a ListServ, and the committee is encouraged to get in touch with questions and feedback.

***Waste-to-Energy (WTE) Feasibility Study - University of Washington Evans School of Public Policy & Governance – Andrew Chesterfield, Hanna Navarro, Alex Reynolds, Donnie Strohfus***

The presentation started with a project overview. Ten case studies of existing WTE operations were examined to illustrate important dimensions of WTE. Interviews were conducted with stakeholders and subject matter experts. Sixty requests were sent, and 29 interviews were conducted with government, community organizations, and private industry. The goal was to capture interactions with WTE. Interview questions and key takeaways were reviewed. Essential factors and strategic consideration for any future WTE development must be planned to complement and accompany current waste management priorities. Siting influences of co-locating WTE facilities near existing infrastructure can increase efficiency and decrease environmental impacts. Environmental justice impacts must also be limited. Financial considerations of WTE development and operations are expensive, and energy resale to state utilities presents future challenges. Additional WTE development in Washington must maintain diligent and continuous monitoring mitigation of environmental and health risks. Public opinion for WTE is mixed and driven by multiple inputs. Additional WTE development in Washington must include considerable and comprehensive public engagement and cooperation. Limitations are 1) the broad and general scope of study; 2) limited sample size; and 3) hypothetical application. Future research recommendations are 1) direct public and industry opinion/feedback polling; 2) site-specific comparison of GHG potency and emission impacts; and 3) specific study of research of modern WTE technologies and approaches. Despite advancements, the same conclusions were reached as in earlier research. A comment was made that research on waste hierarchy suggests most efforts should be on reduce, reuse, and recycle. The group is not taking a position that WTE is a higher priority. They are just considering it with the overall strategy. Gas collection at landfills was considered in the broader context in comparison to WTE, but the study was more focused on general feasibility and application. Detailed effects of different landfill energy collection weren't considered as much as had been hoped. That would be a future recommendation, and warrants a deeper dive to conduct a detailed analysis of different energy methods including landfill gas collection. One member said they are against WTE, and hoped the report reflects that other groups are not in favor. The report speaks to the fact that there are many hurdles based on community acceptance/opposition. The intent of the report is not to highlight what Washington thinks. It highlights what elements should be considered, and to be aware that one of the biggest hurdles is public response. This presentation will be given at the next Program Management Team meeting.

***Future Agenda Topics***

Agenda topics will be circulated for the July 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Contact Julie Robertson with suggestions.

***Roundtable***

Roundtable was skipped due to time constraints.

***Presentations***

- [\*SWAC Meeting Slides\*](#)
- [\*Waste to Energy Feasibility Study - University of Washington Presentation\*](#)

***Meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.***

**Submitted by:** Beth Gill