

## **Zero Waste Washington 2016 Program Highlights**

### **Counties Leading the Way to Safe Medicine Take-Back**

Zero Waste Washington's biggest policy success this year was in Snohomish County where we advocated for passage of a strong medicine take-back ordinance and encouraged others to make their voices heard. This cutting edge local policy requires drug manufacturers to provide and pay for a convenient take-back program for unwanted over-the-counter and prescription medicines. The Snohomish County ordinance is only the second in the state, following a similar ordinance in King County. Pierce and Kitsap Counties are also now considering similar policies and Zero Waste Washington is urging their passage. Medicines disposed in a secure take-back program will not be abused, will not contribute to an accidental poisoning, and will not pollute our waterways.

### **Tacoma Tool Library a Community Success**

Sharing our "stuff" – especially things we need only occasionally – is a great way to decrease waste and build community connections! With community organizing and support from Zero Waste Washington, a group of dedicated and skilled residents opened the Tacoma Tool Library to the public in March 2016. This sharing project is providing access to tools and workshops at little to no cost, serving the dual purpose of preventing waste and providing resource access to low income people. In its first six months, the Tacoma Tool Library's 274 members completed 896 loans! Zero Waste Washington catalyzed this terrific project and continues to provide administrative support as its fiscal sponsor. As we look to 2017, we are excited to grow our sharing program by supporting communities to develop online sharing networks to borrow and lend their "stuff" for free.

### **State Policies – It Takes Persistence**

In the 2016 legislative session, Zero Waste Washington advocated for paint stewardship legislation to recycle leftover latex paint and to properly dispose of toxic oil-based paint. We also provided important technical support on a solar energy bill that included a provision for solar panel recycling. While these bills did not pass in 2016, our work builds momentum for future success. This year it was also critical to hold the line against bills to weaken environmental laws. For example, we successfully collaborated to oppose harmful policy that would have allowed detachable lids on aluminum beer cans, resulting in more litter and less recycling of valuable aluminum.

### **Seattle's Plastic Bag Ban**

Zero Waste Washington supported amendments to Seattle's Plastic Bag Ban which made permanent Seattle's five-cent charge for recyclable paper shopping bags. The changes also included a first-in-the-nation ban on the use of misleading green- and brown-tinted non-compostable plastic bags. This will help keep plastic bags out of the compost.

### **Working to Optimize Commingled Curbside Recycling**

A few years ago, Department of Ecology convened a workgroup to look at how commingled residential collection systems for recyclables were working in seven counties in northwest Washington. The group

included diverse stakeholders, and Zero Waste Washington was at the table to discuss issues and forward-thinking approaches. After many meetings, presentations, research, and dialogue, the report *Optimizing the Commingled Residential Curbside Recycling Systems in Northwest Washington* was released this year and includes key recommendations for important improvements. Implementation subgroups are forming to tackle key areas, and Zero Waste Washington will stay involved.

### **New Leadership for Zero Waste Washington**

2016 has been a year of exciting transitions for Zero Waste Washington. When our long-term program director announced plans to leave the organization, the Board implemented a transition plan to sustain our organizational values and strategic directions – preventing waste, zero waste communities, and policy and producer responsibility – and encourage new energy and growth. Zero Waste Washington’s Board and Staff are now very pleased to welcome Heather Trim as our executive director. Heather has over 20 years of experience at environmental nonprofits where she worked on issues related to water quality, toxics, land use, zero waste and more. We’re excited about the leadership, passion for zero waste and sustainability, and extensive non-profit experience that Heather brings to our organization. We look forward to this next chapter for Zero Waste Washington!

### **Your Voice for Zero Waste**

Zero Waste Washington works hard to be the public’s voice for zero waste during policy debates and strategic conversations that set the direction for recycling and waste prevention in Washington. This year, we provided input as part of a process to update solid waste handling rules including definitions of solid waste and recycling. We shared information about reuse and recycling of children’s car seats at a recycling conference. We also continued participating on the State Waste 2 Resources Advisory Committee that provides input to the Department of Ecology on waste reduction, recycling and toxics issues.