

Zero Waste Washington 2017 Year in Review

STATE EFFORT FOR SAFE MEDICINE TAKE-BACK

Zero Waste Washington's number one policy effort in the 2017 legislative session was advocacy for a statewide safe medicine take-back bill. This cutting-edge policy requires drug manufacturers to provide and pay for a convenient take-back program for unwanted over-the-counter and prescription medicines. In the past few years, we helped pass local ordinances in King, Snohomish, Kitsap, and Pierce counties. New ordinances passed in Clallam and Whatcom counties late this year! 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 (when flushed down toilets and sinks). This was a productive legislative session but a statewide bill did not pass and we are already looking forward to the 2018 strategy as we continue to help lead a large coalition of groups that work on human and wildlife health.

At the state level, we also worked on updating Washington's landmark e-waste bill, holding the line on accountability (i.e., audits) for the e-light program, and strengthening the Model Toxics Control Act, among other state bills.

WASHINGTON STATE PASSED FIRST SOLAR MODULE RECYCLING BILL IN THE US



The 2017 Solar Incentives Job Bill renewed incentives to help home and business owners transition to solar power. And excitingly, as part of the bill, solar module recycling will now be required for units sold after July 1, 2017, in the state. The law requires manufacturers to finance and manage a product stewardship program that ensures used solar units are recycled safely. Zero Waste Washington worked with the Northwest Product Stewardship Council in drafting policy language over two years and helped advocate for solar recycling to be kept in the bill as pressures mounted for the language to be removed in the final version signed by the governor. Now Washington is the first-in-the-nation to require it and we anticipate that the program will serve as a model for programs in other states.

KICKING OFF A PLASTICS CAMPAIGN

From plastic single-use food serviceware, new flexible packaging, and low value plastics in the recycling stream to marine debris and micro plastics, plastics are everywhere and their impacts and management are a growing concern. In 2017, Zero Waste Washington initiated a plastics campaign to tackle these challenging problems. We began work to help quantify the load and sources of plastic litter in local freshwater/stormwater sources feeding into our lakes, Puget Sound and ocean. In September, we hosted a *Plastics Summit* showcasing top researchers and policy leaders who presented on microplastics in local waters, excess packaging, and plastics chemistry and contamination issues. Finally, we supported Lonely Whale's September *Strawless in Seattle* campaign and the removal of the plastic straw exemption in Seattle's food serviceware ordinance. As we move forward into 2018, we are working with community members in several cities to advocate for plastic bag and foamed polystyrene food serviceware bans and other ways to reduce plastic pollution.

IDENTIFYING TOXIC PLASTICIZERS – PHTHALATES – IN OUTDOOR PRODUCTS

Phthalates are chemical plasticizers that can be found in many products, including flooring, medical devices, food packaging, pharmaceuticals, personal care products, paints, and more. They are everywhere AND they are associated with numerous health problems, especially reproductive health. In partnership with state and local agencies and organizations, Zero Waste Washington launched a project to identify and reduce sources of phthalates going into stormwater from outdoor products near the Commencement Bay and Duwamish River Superfund sites. We are testing outdoor products (such as paint, caulking, fencing, etc.) for phthalates and conducting outreach to businesses, institutions and agencies about alternative products that contain low/no phthalates. This information will be used nationally as we move away from toxic chemicals in products which have negative impacts *both* during use and at end of the life of those products.



We are also working on eliminating toxic perfluorinated (PFAs) chemicals – the Teflon chemical - from food serviceware, such as paper plates and clamshells, and other products (coming in 2018!)

SHARING PROJECT: PILOT NETWORK AND REPAIR CAFÉS

In 2017, we piloted Online Community Sharing Networks as a way for people to share their "stuff" for free with other people in their lives: at their kid's school, in the neighborhood, and at their religious institution. We learned important key lessons for future projects. And in Tacoma, in partnership with the Tacoma Tool Library, we launched a new repair café project, in which residents will be able to get small household appliances, toys, clothing and more repaired for free.