

2016 Legislative Session

During the 2016 Legislative Session, Zero Waste Washington took a strong stand in support of good policy on paint stewardship and solar panel recycling. This year it was also critical to hold the line against bills to weaken environmental laws. We opposed harmful policy on public participation grants and the design of aluminum beer cans.

- For the fifth year in a row, Zero Waste Washington supported state legislation requiring manufacturers to set up a responsible **paint take-back program** to recycle leftover latex paint and to properly dispose of toxic oil-based paint. Eight states including our neighbors to the south, Oregon and California, already have similar programs. While the bill passed the House, it was stopped in the Senate.
- Zero Waste Washington supported a provision to **recycle solar panels** that was part of a larger bill to restructure and extend incentives for solar energy. The Legislature failed to pass this broadly supported bill after the Senate added a “poison pill” to the bill that would have prevented the state from acting to reduce climate pollution.
- Back in 1982, Zero Waste Washington helped pass a prohibition on **detachable metal tabs on beverage cans**. This law has been a tremendous success story in enhancing recycling and decreasing litter from detachable tabs. The attached lids stay with the cans and the aluminum can be recycled over and over again. This year, there was an effort to exempt beer cans from the prohibition on detachable metal tabs. This would have been a step in the wrong direction. Zero Waste Washington collaborated with others to defend the original law and successfully oppose this bill.
- Lack of action to adequately address an unprecedented revenue shortfall in critical toxics accounts resulted in diminished funding for toxics cleanup and prevention programs. As part of these cuts, **funding for public participation grants** was eliminated for the 2015-17 biennium. These grants support participation by people and groups in communities dealing with a toxic pollution threat as well as in implementing the state's solid and hazardous waste priorities. Suspending these grants means decreased community engagement on issues that are critical to human health and the environment.