

ZERO WASTE WASHINGTON FALL 2018 QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Tee'ing up for January

We are excited that the legislative session is starting soon – January 14. Over the summer and fall, we have been busy working with our partners to develop background materials, factsheets and policy language to help support important legislative bills addressing plastic pollution and the recycling crisis precipitated by the China National Sword.

Building off of the amazing number of local ordinances addressing single-use plastics, it is time to take a big step and tee up for a statewide plastic bag bill (see below). This sense of timing was reinforced by the recent announcement that Kroger, the parent company of Fred Meyer, QFC and other major grocers across the US, that they are phasing out carry-home plastic bags.

China's import restrictions spur action

Washington's cities and counties are reeling from the major crisis that has been precipitated by China's new restrictions on accepting recycled materials from overseas. Our local materials recycling facilities (MRFs) are no longer able to send their bales of recyclable materials to China. At first, these bales were being redirected to other Southeast Asian countries, but this outlet is slowly closing as well. Costs are rising, and in some areas, these increased costs are being passed along to residents in the form of monthly surcharges. This is forcing all of us to rethink our recycling system. Thus, we are working with partners on several major policies that would revamp the system and also bring more funds in to help support cities' and counties' recycling programs, including education, and litter programs. We will also support a bill to reduce single-use plastic food serviceware.

Other zero waste issues

In addition to addressing plastics, recycling and litter, our legislative work is slated to cover other zero waste arenas:

PAINT STEWARDSHIP: Old cans of old paint stored out in the garage or in storerooms are a huge problem, and often just get tossed in the trash. It's time for Washington to join the eight other states with paint stewardship programs and make it easy and free to recycle latex paint and safely dispose of oil-based paint.

FOOD WASTE: In spite of how hard many of us work to reduce food waste in our daily lives, 17% of the waste going to the landfill in Washington is food waste. About half of that is edible food. Representative Beth Doglio will re-introduce her bill to set a goal for Washington to reduce our food waste by 50% by 2030. Edible food needs to be going to food groups, not to



the landfill. And spoiled food that is inedible needs to be composted.

COMPOST LABELING STANDARDS: There is a great deal of confusion about what products are truly compostable and those that are merely “biodegradable.” A statewide bill that provides standards for compostability labeling would remove this uncertainty and the potential for greenwashing.

RIGHT TO REPAIR: Finally, a bill to ensure Right to Repair was well received in the legislature last year and could advance this coming session. It would allow independent repair shops to have access to manufacturers electronic codes, parts and instructions (at cost) so they can more easily fix cell phones, computers and other items with screens. A Right to Repair law would create jobs and help us all repair rather than toss our electronic-based products.



We are looking forward to lots of policy action at the state level, starting in January! And please see below for information about our Environmental Lobby Day on January 29.

Learn More

If you are interested in learning more about any of these efforts, please contact Heather at Heather@zerowastewashington.org or (206) 441-1790.

Getting ready for a statewide plastic bag bill, building on the success of local ordinances

It is time for a statewide Reusable Bag Bill. We have been working with partners to get ready for the 2019 legislative session. Representative Strom Peterson and Senator Kevin Ranker are pleased to be the lead sponsors. Rep. Peterson was the fabulous and hard-working prime sponsor of last year’s Drug Take-Back Law. Sen. Ranker is well known for his leadership on marine pollution issues, locally and across the US.

On the local level, there have been ten bag ordinances advanced in city councils in Washington State in 2018. City councils in Port Angeles, La Conner, Kenmore, Lake Forest Park, North Bend, Everett and Gig Harbor passed reusable bag ordinances. Several more cities introduced ordinances at the council level and will vote in the near future: Snohomish, Burien, and Kent.

These local ordinances have been promoted by the hard work of numerous community members and council members who are zero waste champions!

Bag bill campaign kicked off at Seattle Aquarium

On November 28, Zero Waste Washington joined our partners in an event at the Seattle Aquarium to launch the statewide plastic bag bill campaign. Senator Kevin Ranker, Representative Strom Peterson and Kent City Councilmember Brenda Fincher spoke about the importance of the bill to help reduce plastic pollution and also reduce contamination and operation problems at our recycling facilities.



To the delight of children visiting the aquarium, the Bag Monster made a special appearance. His costume is made of 500 plastic bags which represent the number of bags used by average American per year.

Heads up for Environmental Lobby Day (Jan 29) and the 4 Environmental Priorities

Every year, the environmental community that lobbies the state legislature comes together to select four priorities. This means that these bills get a little more attention and have fully developed campaigns. The four priorities for 2019 are bills for Reusable Bags, Oil Spill Prevention, Orcas, and promoting 100% Renewable Energy.

If you have signed up to receive our legislative action email updates, you will hear more about bill status and ways you can help as the bills move forward, starting in January.

We hope you will join us for Environmental Lobby Day on January 29. This fun day in Olympia will give you an opportunity to participate in workshops to learn about these priorities as well as other bills, and to receive training and, most importantly, an opportunity to meet with your legislators to let them know about your opinions.

Lake Forest Park's ordinance for food service waste is the most advanced in the US



Not only did Lake Forest Park enact an ordinance that bans thin plastic carry home bags, they also banned foamed styrofoam food “to go” containers. The ordinance requires that containers **must now be compostable** in their compost stream. We believe that this is the most advanced food serviceware ordinance in the US. The city's yard waste and food waste, including compostable food packaging, goes to a commercial compost facility. This new law will help reduce food waste because people can toss their leftover food packaging with leftover bits of food right into their curbside yard bins.

Community members in Lake Forest Park have worked on the ordinance for nine years! Exemplary actions include surveying and talking with local businesses, researching alternatives and building off of other ordinances. The final result is a terrific next-generation ordinance.

Thank you to Kyla

We were sad to say good bye to Kyla Wilson who recently left her position at Zero Waste Washington to go to graduate school in Sweden. For the past year, she was our plastic campaign coordinator, helping write our model reusable bag and food serviceware ordinances, producing other educational materials and working to support community members and council members and their staff in numerous locations around the state. We miss her and wish her well in in her graduate studies.



If you are interested in information or other support in working to address single-use plastic items in your city or county, please contact Marisol Diaz at marisol@zerowastewashington.org or (206) 741-1790.

Report from our Fix-It Fairs in Tacoma

By Maria Teresa Gámez



Imagine walking into a room and finding a buzz of activity. Sewing machines whirring, drills undoing screws, and people chatting. That is what our monthly Fix-It Fairs in Tacoma sound like.

In partnership with the Tacoma Tool Library and the Tacoma Housing Authority, City of Tacoma Environmental Services, Centro Latino, Rebuilding Together South Sound, and the Tacoma Public Library system, we hosted four fairs in fall 2018. Volunteer fixers repaired household items, computers and sewed up torn clothing (even a boot!).

It was fun to see the variety of items that people brought in. And these have been real community events. We have had the opportunity to share with people from different cultures and generations who have something in common: love for their environment and an understanding of the importance of waste reduction.

Fix-It Fairs are a way to extend the life of items

At the beginning of this project, we thought the reasons driving people to come to these events were practical or sentimental. And yes, people want to save money and want to keep items that have personal value to them. But beyond that, Tacoma residents are well aware of the importance of waste prevention initiatives. The community wants to be active in this process, so people are approaching the Fix-It Fairs not only to fix their broken items but to really extend their life by donating some of the fixed items to people who are able to reuse them.



At summer outreach events, where we had booths and displays to promote the fairs, many residents asked us if we could receive their items and donate them. Thankfully, the Chaya Movement is supporting this idea and has facilitated a partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound. They are going to be with us at every event to take donated (and newly repaired!) clothing, backpacks, housewares, small appliances, toys and electronics, among others.

Fairs will be spread throughout the city

We knew the repair events were a great idea and we knew people would like them, but we weren't expecting the tremendous reception that this pilot program is having in Tacoma. For this reason, in the coming months we will be hosting Fix-It Fairs all over the city. We want residents in more neighborhoods of Tacoma to have access to these events and to share with us their ideas and opinions about them.

Our next repair event will take place on January 19 at 2328 Fawcett Ave with the strong support of Second Use. We can't wait to share some repair time with this vibrant community. We will be hosting Fix-it Fairs in other library branches and other sites around the city. We hope to see you in one of our events.

For more info: Follow us on Facebook and stay tuned for more information: [Fix-It Fairs – Tacoma](#). Fairs will be scheduled approximately once a month through June 2019, at different locations in Tacoma. Please check the schedule at <http://www.tacomatoolibrary.com>

Introducing Marisol Diaz

Zero Waste Washington is pleased to welcome Marisol Diaz as our new Outreach and Policy Coordinator, working on plastic reduction and toxic chemicals. Marisol started December 1st and has dived right into the action, as we have already been engaged in supporting five bag ordinances in December.



Marisol is a graduate of the University of Washington with a major in Community, Environment and Planning. She has such a strong passion for reducing and eliminating waste that she completed a training course at UW and is now a Master Composter Sustainability Steward. She tries to live her life as zero waste as possible including educating her friends and family about the benefits of going zero waste. During her spare time, she enjoys reading, hiking with her dog, and spending time with family.

In 2019, Marisol will be working on local and statewide plastics ordinances, our litter assessment collaborative research project and a new initiative working with the Duwamish Valley Youth Corps supporting the Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition.

Below are reflections from Marisol about her experience with the Master Composter program last year:

I was inspired to sign up for the Master Composter Sustainability Steward volunteer program last year as I have always had a passion for reducing our waste and especially for the importance of making wonderfully rich soil from compost. I grew up in central WA which is in the heart of Washington's farmland.

Through this volunteer program, I learned the importance of compost and how to build a compost pile. I also increased my knowledge of recyclables and the recycling process in general. It was really interesting to learn the process of how our recyclables end up being prepped and ready to export to various countries. I had no idea all recycling were squished into bales and that plastic bags, among other items, are the main contamination of the bales. I am excited to use this knowledge and further acquired knowledge at Zero Waste Washington to help promote the reduction of waste and the preservation of our valuable resources in my new job. – Marisol Diaz

Plastic pollution efforts ramping up



By Jessica Mitchell, Zero Waste Washington Summer Intern

Three months ago, as I prepared myself for a summer of Zero Waste work and an immersive intern experience, the last thing I thought I'd be doing was taking home a bucket of used cigarette butts to count one-by-one on my living room floor.

While this process was just as smelly as it sounds, I couldn't help but be surprised by the satisfaction of reaching that last 1,002nd cigarette butt. My work on the litter

assessment project has been tedious at times, but it has also opened my eyes to the beauty of citizen science, and good old-fashioned grit. The organizations and community groups that have come together to do these cleanups are strong-headed and persistent in the best way possible. It's not every day that neighbors work together to pick up and count "every little, itty, bitty piece of trash", as Zero Waste Washington's Executive Director Heather Trim would say.

Testing a new litter protocol

Zero Waste Washington has been working on the Escaped Trash Assessment Protocol (ETAP) for a little less than a year now. The draft protocol was created by EPA. Groups like Zero Waste Washington are testing it, so it can be revised and then made openly accessible for all citizens to use. The goal is to compare litter data between different locations. Where are the problem areas? How are water bodies affected? Is a sufficient amount of litter near a body of water enough to categorize it impaired under the Clean Water Act? How much is a "sufficient amount"? To get to these answers, we have to start with knowing the nitty gritty details about the litter that is present in our communities.



Coming into this project, everything was fresh and new. I had never led a litter cleanup before, nonetheless I answered a barrage of sorting questions from volunteers (there were 45 categories to sort the litter into...45!): "Yes, rubber bands go in #24 Plastic: Other Food Products and Packaging."; "yes, we are collecting dog poop—it goes in #45 Organic Matter"; "a balloon? That goes in #35 Entertainment and Recreation."

Beaches versus urban alleys

One of the things that was most interesting to me was the difference in the amount of litter between urban areas and beaches/park areas.

As a point of comparison, we found 22 cigarette butts on Seahurst Beach and more than 1,500 butts in two blocks of downtown Burien. While this difference is jarring, it's sad to realize that most of these cigarette butts ultimately end up in our storm drains and the Puget Sound. Another surprise was our discovery that most people do not know that cigarette filters are made from plastic, not cotton. Thus, they can take up to 500 years to degrade, and even then, they still contaminate our waters as microplastics.



This experience has been unique and exciting; it's truly astonishing how many people want to talk about litter. Let's keep the conversation and the hard work going!

This protocol is intensive and wholeheartedly thorough, but also fundamentally necessary to push

the wheel of legislative change. I can tell that Zero Waste Washington is excited for the day when litter assessment approach will help protect our waterways.

If you lead cleanups and are interested in helping with this project, please contact Marisol Diaz at marisol@zerowastewashington.org

Did you know that 85% of textile waste ends up in landfills?

Zero Waste Washington was pleased to partner with the Washington State Recycling Association to present an informative all-day forum – *The Shirt Off Your Back – The State of Textile Recycling, Reuse, and Repair Today* – on October 30 at REI in Seattle.

What is the story of textile waste?

We don't think about textile waste that often. It is kind of a silent form of waste. It doesn't get the media attention of other materials, such as plastic and metal. With the rise of "fast fashion," there are estimates that average American throws away about 81 pounds of clothing every year – to the landfill. And of donations to Goodwill and other charities, only 10-20% are sold in their thrift stores and over 45% gets sent overseas.



African countries are starting to say "No!" Cheap second-hand American clothing is ruining their local textile industries. According to a recent New York Times article, in Kenya, this clothing is called the "clothes of dead white people." In Mozambique, they are called the "clothing of calamity." Furthermore, there is a question of dignity. Rwanda is cutting off the imports of secondhand clothes, "not only on the grounds of protecting a nascent local industry, but also because it says wearing hand-me-downs compromises the dignity of its people."

Forum

At the forum, we explored the impact of textiles on the waste stream, consumer behavior related to buying clothing and other products, the reuse and recycling of textiles, and upstream efforts by designers and brands who are weaving durability and sustainability into their products. We heard from local and national leaders in clothing and gear reuse, fast fashion impacts, repair, and innovative design.

PowerPoints and videos from the forum are available

Please go to <https://zerowastewashington.org/textile-forum/> to view the PowerPoint presentations and videos from the forum.

Thank you to the sponsors and board member Hannah Johnson

A big thank you goes to the sponsors of the textile waste forum: Seattle Public Utility, King County Department of Natural Resources, REI, and Buffalo. With their financial support, we were able to support the attendance of individuals who might have not otherwise been able to participate.

Thank you also to all of the Zero Waste Washington board members and volunteers who helped out with the event, with a special shout out to board member Hannah Johnson who provided durable serviceware from mugs to plates and napkins. It was a zero waste event!

Zero waste groups around the state

If you want to make zero waste changes in your daily life, consider joining up with one of the many zero waste groups in Washington.

Here is a listing of our local zero waste community groups (linked to their url). They all have fun and engaging activities:



[Bainbridge Island Zero Waste](#)

[Green Okanogan](#)

[Methow Recycles](#)

[Orcas Island Exchange](#)

[Seattle Zero Waste](#)

[Tacoma Zero Waste](#)

[Zero Waste Bellingham](#)

[Zero Waste Snohomish](#)

[Zero Waste Vashon](#)

If you are part of a group that we have missed, please email us. We are in the process of building out our brand-new website and we want to include a link to your group!

We can't do it without you!

Thank you for all that you do in your own lives and in the community to help create a zero waste future. Actions you take every day help reduce the amount of waste going into the trash!

Thank you, too, for your generous support which is paving the way for a zero waste future in Washington.

Donate [here](#)

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