

Zero Waste Washington 2019 Winter Quarterly Enewsletter

Bills progressing in legislative session... except one!

Last June, we started work with partners to support nine legislative bills to address a range of zero waste issues. Seven of these are moving forward in a good fashion; one died for the year. **For one bill, we need help in the form of calls and emails to your legislators.** The looming deadline is a cutoff date of March 13 (5 pm) for bills to pass out of their house of origin.



Bill that needs help

The remaining one bill that needs your help at this time is a terrific bill that would help reduce waste and create green jobs in Washington:

- **Right to Repair (SHB 1342/SB 5799 – Concerning the fair servicing and repair of digital electronic products):** This bill would require digital electronic product manufacturers, such as Apple and Microsoft, to make available electronic and repair information, parts, and tools related to independent repair. This bill makes it possible for small businesses to do repairs of cellphones and other items with motherboards and screens. This way, people will keep using their items instead of tossing them!

You can find out the status of all of the bills we are supporting and **how to contact your legislators** [here](#)

Our two priority bills address plastics



Zero Waste Washington's two top priority bills for the 2019 session are both related to plastics and have moved forward to the House:

The Reusable Bag Bill (SB 5323), championed by Rep. Strom Peterson and Sen. Mona Das, builds on the 28 local plastic bag ordinances in place in Washington. Thin plastic carry home bags would be banned. Retail stores could offer paper bags and thicker, reusable plastic film bags for an 8-cent pass-through charge that the retailer retains. The goal is for people to bring their own bag and that is why the charge was important to us. For the independent grocers and the small mom and pop stores, it was important to have the 8-cent charge in order to help defray their costs for these more expensive bags (paper bags cost 10-12 cents and thicker plastic bags cost over 8 cents).

The bill passed the senate on March 5th with a bipartisan 31-14-4 vote. If this bill passes the House and becomes law, Washington's bag law would be stronger than California's (the only statewide bill in place) in that it would apply to all retail and it would require that compostable produce bags be green or brown tinted if they are actually compostable, and not green or brown if they are not.

Our other top priority is the **Plastic Package Stewardship bill (2SSB 5397)**, championed by Sen. Christine Rolfes and Rep. Strom Peterson. This was slimmed down to a study bill. It requires the WA State

Department of Ecology to hire a consultant to create a data report that would lead to legislation (in 2021) to dramatically improve our recycling system in Washington by creating a stewardship program paid for by the plastic packaging manufacturers. Similar to programs in place in the European Union and in British Columbia, the end of life of all plastic packaging would be responsibly managed. This bill passed the Senate floor unanimously, 48-0, on March 8.

Other Zero Waste Washington priorities

We are working on other priority zero waste bills that have had good movement forward, so far. You can check their current status *here* as we update our website regularly. These bills are:



- **Food waste (2SHB 1114):** Establishes a goal for the state to reduce, by 50%, the amount of wasted food generated annually by 2030, relative to 2017 levels. Passed the House with bipartisan vote 96-0-2.
- **Compostability labeling (SHB 1569):** Authorizes the state’s attorney general and local governments to pursue false or misleading environmental claims and “greenwashing” for plastic products claiming to be “compostable” or “biodegradable” when in fact they are not. Also, requires clear and easy to understand labeling on compostable products sold for use in Washington. Passed the House with bipartisan vote 67-37-1.
- **Plastic straws (SSB 5077):** Requires that straws only be offered on-demand. Passed the Senate with a bipartisan vote 27-21-1.
- **Sustainable Recycling (2SHB 1543):** Creates a recycling development center to research, incentivize, and develop new markets and expand existing markets for recycled commodities and recycling facilities and requires Ecology and local jurisdictions to create and implement recycling contamination reduction and outreach plan. Passed the House with bipartisan vote 64-32-2.
- **Paint Stewardship (SHB 1652):** Requires stewardship program (i.e., free recycling) for discarded latex and oil-based paint. There is a hearing scheduled in House Appropriations Committee on March 14, 2019 (this bill is deemed necessary for the budget and not subject to fiscal cutoffs).
- **Litter Tax Budget item:** Restores the State Litter Tax to its intended uses to reduce litter source and improve recycling. This item will be part of the budget debates coming up.

Environmental Priorities Coalition

Zero Waste Washington is part of the Environmental Priorities Coalition. The Coalition is made up of more than 20 statewide environmental organizations. For the 2019 legislative session, we have four priorities which are all moving forward well:

- Reusable Bag Bill (SSB 5323)
- 100% Clean Electricity (HB 1211/ SB 5116) – Changing our electrical power to fossil-free, clean energy
- Orca Emergency Response (Habitat: HB 1579/SB 5580; Vessel noise: HB 1580/SB 5577; Toxics: HB 1194/SB 5135) – Restoring health of orca population
- Oil Spill Prevention (SB 5578/HB 1578) – Strengthening oil transportation safety and spill prevention

The coalition has also adopted a Partnership Agenda to support work that is important for environmental progress being led by partners outside the coalition and include the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL), Pesticide Safety for Communities, Presumptive Disease Recognition for Firefighters and Solar Fairness bills.

Thank you all for your help in moving all of these important bills forward. If you have any questions, please contact Heather at heather@zerowastewashington.org.

New waste monster project in Seattle

By Maria Teresa Gámez

Zero Waste Washington is starting a new project with the Seattle School District and other partners to educate K-4 students about waste prevention and contamination reduction. These fun, interactive assembly skits will feature waste monsters. Funded by Seattle Public Utilities and the Washington State Department of Ecology (and aligned with their messaging), the skits will focus on the challenges that the schools are facing in their cafeterias.

For example, we want students to eat what they take (and take what they will eat). Lots of food and beverages are only partially consumed. And we want students to remember to NOT put plastic in their school's compost.

The simple skits will include a lot of humor and sassiness. Our idea is to help catch the attention of the students and give them the awareness they need to reduce waste and prevent contamination.

Meet the protagonists...

- Wrapper monster – kind of cranky!
- Plastic bottle monster – very glamorous and silky
- Compost monster – warm and nurturing...
- Drink monster – kind of slurpy
- Bag monster – our well-known friendly monster that has been around!



Volunteers needed

We need sewing/crafting volunteers to help make these fabulous monsters and the few props that will be required. We will be hosting work parties in the next month.

We also need volunteers to help embody the characters in the skits. These will likely be morning assemblies at schools in different locations in Seattle and will each be about a 2-hour commitment. No experience is necessary.

This is going to be fun!

Come help us have some entertaining and meaningful interactions with our most important stakeholders!

For more information and to get involved, email Maria at maria@zerowastewashington.org

Plastic Summit, Bellingham, April 27, 2019

On Saturday, April 27, 2019, please join the Mt. Baker Group of the Sierra Club and Zero Waste Washington for *The Truth About Plastics*, an educational plastics forum at Whatcom Community College in Bellingham.

At this all-day event we will explore the life cycle of plastics; the harmful impacts along the way; and how we all, especially industry and government, can reduce or eliminate those impacts. A terrific slate of speakers and interactive activities will make this an event to remember!

Registration available on Brown Paper Tickets, <https://plastics.brownpapertickets.com>. Cost (includes healthy lunch) is \$15 for general admission, \$10 for seniors, and free for registered students.

If you have questions, please email rickeggerth@gmail.com or heather@zerowastewashington.org.



A lab experience: prepping products for phthalates testing

First-hand report by Marisol Diaz



I felt super important. All my ideas would be heard without a doubt in anyone's minds. I was someone people would look up to and respect—that is how I felt when I put on a lab coat for the very first time in order to prepare samples for phthalates testing.

This project intrigued me. I never suspected something as normal as traffic safety equipment could be well...unsafe! By unsafe I mean, between normal wear and tear as well as harsh weather conditions, the chemicals might leach out the traffic safety equipment and other exterior products and run the risk of getting into our storm drains and eventually into our lakes, rivers, and the Salish Sea.

Phthalates are a toxic chemical in everyday products

Phthalates are toxic chemicals – specifically endocrine disruptors. This means they disrupt human hormones and impact reproduction, growth and more. Phthalates are group of chemicals made from petroleum used to increase the flexibility of plastics and also to hold fragrances and act as solvents. They are found many things, from personal care products and vinyl flooring to plastic toys and electronics.

Zero Waste Washington is testing outdoor products – including paints, signage, street marking paints, and traffic control items – for phthalates to see if they might be a source of stormwater pollution. This work is funded by a NEP grant administered by the WA State Department of Ecology.

The experience of going to the lab

In February, along with my co-workers, I went to WA State Department of Ecology's lab in Lacey to prepare samples from traffic safety equipment along with other exterior products to send out to be tested for phthalates. Ecology staff had agreed to do a workshop to help train people like myself and people from other organization how to prepare samples.



My experience in the lab was very educational. I learned how to properly prep samples for testing. This experience was surreal as I never imagined myself, wearing a white coat, working in a lab, and using so many Kimwipes to prep samples for testing. The laboratory team members that trained us were very nice, intelligent, and funny.

Although sample prepping was more tedious than fun, the team sure knew how to keep a smile on our faces. The most important lesson I learned was to change my gloves every time I touched something other than the samples I was preparing.

I'm excited to learn the results of the tests. I hope they come back negative, but if they come back positive for phthalates then at least we know we have a problem and we can work towards a solution.



Big thanks to (from left to right): Kathy Peter (Center for Urban Waters Tacoma), Arati Kaza (Quality Assurance Officer), Prajwol Tuladhar (Prep. Room Testing Specialist), Chrissy Wiseman (Senior Prep. Room Specialist), Darin Rice, Program Manager, Heather Trim (Zero Waste Washington), Sean Smith (Reducing Toxic Threats Supervisor), Maria Gamez (Zero Waste Washington), Samuel Iwenofu (Senior Program Chemist), Ed Gonzalez (NW Pollution Prevention Resource Center), and Craig Manahan (Safer Ingredient Chemist). Not shown: Marisol Diaz (Zero Waste Washington), Kari Trumbull (Product Testing Chemist), Ken Zarker (Section manager) and Tom Gries (NEP Quality Assurance Coordinator).

Zero waste shopping

When we are out around the state giving talks about zero waste, we are often asked about where to buy items without plastic packaging. Great news! There are more and more zero waste stores popping up in the Pacific Northwest.

While there are concerns that zero waste shopping can be more expensive, the prices are variable – some items are more expensive and some are less – and you can usually keep your costs comparable by careful shopping. And don't forget to factor in the externalized costs of all of that plastic packaging you are avoiding.

Zero Waste Stores

Here are links to the existing or *soon-to-come* zero waste stores in our region:

[A Drop in the Ocean](#), Tacoma (pop up shops)

[Eco Collective](#), Seattle (Ballard)

[Nada](#), Vancouver, BC

[Public Goods and Services](#), Seattle (West Seattle)

[Scoop Marketplace](#), Seattle – Currently crowdsourcing funds for launch

[The Mazama Store](#), Mazama, WA

[The Preserve Shop](#), Seattle and Bellingham (pop up shops)

[The Soap Dispensary and Kitchen Staples](#), Vancouver, BC

[Recology Stores](#), Various locations

Please visit these stores to help nurture their growth!

If you know of stores we missed, please email us so we can add them to our website.

Can you bring your own container?

There is a great deal of confusion about whether you can bring your own container to a grocery or provisions store or a restaurant or coffee shop. Zero Waste Washington has launched a project to work on this policy issue. We would like to see an update to the regulations and also more opportunities to “bring your own,” while making sure that there are no health problems.

Amazon efforts

With the growth of online shopping, which has coincided with the decline of print newspaper, America's fiber-recycling waste has shifted to from “grey to brown” (i.e., from newsprint to corrugated cardboard-



dominated). We can help reduce this “Amazon effect” of a bump up of corrugated packaging in our dumpsters and curbside bins.

For those of you who do shop online with Amazon, you can use their [Frustration-Free Packaging service](#). This program lets you reduce packaging by opting to ship in the original packaging (items arrive in packaging that reveals what’s inside). Amazon has worked with vendors to optimize and certify their packaging so items can ship in their original box – without the need for an Amazon overbox. And don’t forget you can select “Delivery in fewest possible packages” on checkout.

Email us if you know of other zero waste stores or you want to help with our effort to get more durables and bring your own in place.

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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