

Zero Waste Washington Summer Quarterly Enewsletter

July 2019

Is it time to “bring your own container” in Washington?

By Elisabeth Archer

Did you know that it is currently illegal in Washington State to “bring your own container” for food? With partners, we are working to get that changed. **You can help next week by giving comments at public meetings around the state or sending in a comment.** Washington’s Department of Health is updating our State Food Code. Join Zero Waste Washington and others to support the update and inclusion of new “bring your own” provisions.



New proposed language

The draft version of the code (WAC 246-215-03348.10), being reviewed this summer, would allow consumers to:

- Bring your own container to fill yourself with *not-ready-to-eat* foods like dried pasta and beans or packaged foods like wrapped candies, and
- Bring your own container that food establishment employees can fill for you with *ready-to-eat* food such as teriyaki or salads.

In addition, we would like the proposed code to allow consumers to bring their own container for *all* beverages, including those that contain milk, for example.

Public meetings

You can email in a comment OR attend one of the public hearings around the state and give a brief comment:

- **Ferndale Library**– July 22, 2019 at 1-3pm (Ferndale Meeting Room, 2125 Main Street, Ferndale)
- **Renton Technical College** – July 23, 2019 at 1-3pm (Blencoe Auditorium, 3000 NE 4th Street, Renton)
- **Green Lake Library** – July 23, 2019 at 5:30-7:30pm (Green Lake Meeting Room, 7364 E. Green Lake Dr. N., Seattle)
- **Vancouver Community Library** – July 24, 2019 at 2-4pm (Columbia Room, 901 C Street, Vancouver)
- **Webinar**– July 25, 2019 at 9am-11am (<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8220844330128613890> to register for the online presentation).



Talking points and sample email

Talking points and a sample email click [here](#).

Send comments to food.safety@doh.wa.gov by July 31, 2019.

For more info about the code: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Food/FoodWorkerandIndustry/FoodSafetyRules/FoodCodeRuleRevision>

Thank you all for your help in moving this issue forward. If you have any questions, please contact Elisabeth at elisabeth@zerowastewashington.org or Heather at heather@zerowastewashington.org.

Refilling your water bottle at local businesses

By Marisol Diaz

Did you know a [million single-use plastic bottles are purchased every minute](#)? Fortunately, there is a way to significantly reduce this vast amount of plastic — all you have to do is ask for water.

Zero Waste Washington is kicking off a new project in Seattle and in Snohomish County, in partnership with agencies and others, to make it easier to refill your water bottle. We will be contacting businesses to ask if they would like to be listed on an online app as places for free refills. The project starts off later this summer.

Eligible locations will include agencies, public parks, and businesses. Window clings will be provided to identify refill locations.



Starting local – going statewide

Seattle project. Big thanks to Seattle Public Utilities for providing grant funding to support a year-long project to contact businesses to sign up as refill locations and then to do follow-up. We will be evaluating the success of the program and making adjustments.

Snohomish County project. Council member Nate Nehring and the Snohomish Health District have been the inspiration for starting the refill project in Snohomish County. An initial planning meeting in June attracted a large number of local elected officials and representatives from agencies and organizations, all ready to help make the project a success.

Statewide. After starting in these two locations, our goal is for this project to expand across Washington to include over 5,000 locations listed on the app.

We need your help

If you are a business owner and would like to be included, please let us know. And if you would like to volunteer to help contact businesses, we would love your help.

For more information about the water refill station project or if you would like to volunteer, please contact Marisol at marisol@zerowastewashington.org.

Welcome Xenia. Fix-It Fairs expanding to Seattle and Kitsap

Zero Waste Washington is pleased to welcome Xenia Dolovova to our staff. Xenia moved to Seattle recently from the United Arab Emirates. She has a wonderfully diverse career background which is perfect for working on zero waste issues, which as you know cut across so many areas of our lives and work.



Observation from Xenia:

I've always been an unconsciously competent "low waste citizen," whether I lived in Moldova, where I'm from, France, Norway, Turkey, or United Arab Emirates. One can assume those countries expect very different things from the residents in terms of waste management and consumption habits. I stayed away from impulsive shopping while in the UAE (there is not a lot more to do than that) and truly admired a garbage sorting system in Scandinavia (oh, those people they respect it fanatically).

Evolving as a human, I hoped there is always a perfect amount of resources for every need, and if a surplus happens in one place, it should go towards a deficit in another. Every time I have a perfect amount of material for a dress that I sew with zero threads I have to waste, or I manage to use a piece of makeup to the very last dust size particle before buying a new one, I experience a genuine triumph.

I've spent 9 years developing a career in business, but the more skills I developed the more I wanted to apply them in a positive field with global importance. Before moving to the US, I'd decided to dedicate myself to tackling waste management issues in a favorable environment. So that brought me here, in Washington, to Zero Waste Washington. I'll be gladly serving you, the reader, by moving the waste reduction initiatives to their realization. Enjoy the summer in a zero-waste way!

A warm thank you to Maria Gamez

Xenia is taking over Maria's spot on our staff, building on her great work. Maria is taking time off to complete some educational goals and do a career transition. We are so thankful for her contributions to Zero Waste Washington. Maria has done a wonderful job in developing Fix-It Fairs in Tacoma and in bringing dimension and depth to our organization. We will miss her as a staff member but look forward to working with her as she creates new pathways. We know she will be highly successful!

Fix-It Fairs expand: Tacoma, Seattle and Kitsap County

With support from a Public Participation Grant from the WA State Department of Ecology, we are thrilled to be expanding Fix-It Fairs to now include Seattle and Kitsap County. At Fix-It Fairs, residents bring in small household items for free repairs.



We are seeking fixers and volunteers to help support the fairs in Tacoma, Seattle and Kitsap County.

In addition, with the goal of helping support the growing movement of tool libraries, fix-it events, and DIY/makers, we will be putting together a summit in 2020 to bring together leaders of these initiatives to share ideas. The event will include technical speakers as well. If you are interested in helping plan the summit, please contact Xenia.

Xenia will be working to support Fix-It Fairs in Tacoma, Seattle and Kitsap County, as well as other new zero waste projects. Please contact Xenia at xenia@zerowastewashington.org with any questions and if you are interested in being a fixer or volunteer at Fix-It Fairs.

A Personal Immersion in Pacific North-Waste: Chilean perspective

By Nicolás Díaz, Summer UW Fellow at Zero Waste Washington

When I first arrived from Chile to start my MPA program at the University of Washington, I couldn't stop staring at the recycling and compost bins placed in an orderly fashion along the street to be centrally collected by the city. It was like a dream come true for an advocate for sustainability like me. I couldn't stop thinking "this should happen in Chile!"

Zero waste is different in Chile

Only 4% of waste is diverted from landfills in Chile. Waste collection in Chile, though, has improved impressively in the recent years, with an increase of the share of landfills from 60% to 75% between 2009 and 2015. During 2016, the Congress also passed a law to implement a nationwide waste management system based on extended responsibility of producers, including packaging and electronics. We hope that these changes allow the country to reduce its reliance on landfilling and improve not only our economic performance but also the quality of life of the communities that live next to these areas.



Another thing I was astounded about in the US is the abundance of thrift stores. In Chile, as in most of Central and South America, thrift stores are much less frequent – if not nonexistent – because most of the people don't have the means of giving their belongings away. Instead, clothes and articles are usually passed among members of the family, friends, or sold when possible. Items were historically fixed and repaired until they truly were unusable, although this has changed with time because it is less expensive to throw it away and buy a new one. Sadly, people are firmly attached to their economy and all the incentives are put in buying stuff and getting rid of trash.

Online sales are a big difference too. While in Chile the trend keeps developing, in here it is one of the first things I noticed: cardboard boxes everywhere. Junk mail is massive, and the amount of paper generated as waste is incredible. Maybe it's a connection that goes beyond the paper itself because even checks keep being used when in Chile you practically don't see them. It certainly caused an impression when my landlord asked me for a check the first time, in the US!

Recycling challenges in Washington

As part of Zero Waste Washington this summer, I am analyzing how Washington's municipal governments are responding to the changing recycling scheme worldwide and will be creating a report: *The State of Recycling in Washington*. Due to China's new restrictions on imports, pressure on generating high-quality recyclable bales has impacted all government levels. Municipalities are trying to adapt their collection systems and citizens for a new paradigm.

It is certainly a dynamic process in which all efforts must be put in reducing our waste and improving how we attenuate our reliance on virgin materials in the US and in Chile. Much more needs to be done in both countries, let's keep pushing forward!

Nicolás' report – The State of Recycling in Washington – will be available in September. In the meantime, if you have questions or suggestions, please contact him at nm.diaz.h@gmail.com.

Aug 15 movie: Rubber Jellyfish

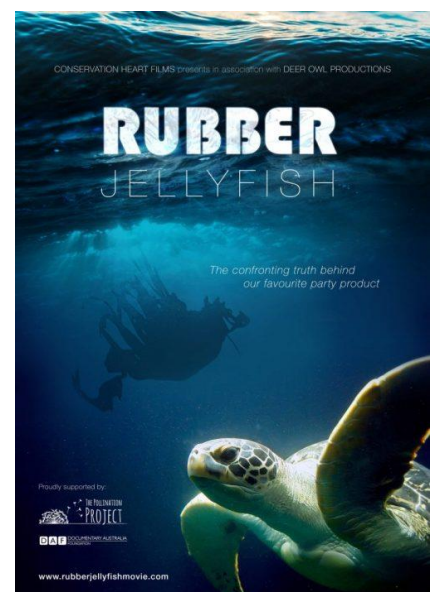
Zero Waste Washington in partnership with Bainbridge Island Zero Waste invites you to a special screening of a new documentary film – Rubber Jellyfish – on August 15. The director, Carly Wilson, who grew up in Bremerton, will be attending the screening and answering questions afterwards.

Rubber Jellyfish reveals the shocking jellyfish-like shapes that balloons burst into when they are released up into the air and how sea turtles and other species mistake these items for food. The film also explores the balloon industry greenwashing that kept this phenomenon a secret for decades.

Details:

- ◆ WHAT: Screening of Rubber Jellyfish, followed by Q&A with the director
- ◆ WHEN: Thursday, August 15, 2019
- ◆ TIME: 6:30-8:30 pm
- ◆ WHERE: Eagle Harbor Church, 105 Winslow Way W, Bainbridge Island
- ◆ COST: Free
- ◆ RSVP: Please click [here](#) or follow <https://bpt.me/4301236> to reserve your spot
- ◆ Light snacks will be provided.

We look forward to seeing you there.



Duwamish Youth Corps wants you to ditch plastics

By Marisol Diaz

Working in partnership with the Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition, we just finished our first plastic pollution session with the Duwamish Valley Youth Corps. The students did litter cleanups, learned about plastics, toured Recology's recycling facility and King County's Renton Water Treatment Plant, and created amazing videos and outreach messaging.

Under the leadership of Paulina Lopez and Carmen Martinez, the youth corps has flourished into a strong program that provides pollution education and leadership and job skill preparation. Thanks to the King County Waterworks grant program and King Conservation District's (KCD) Seattle Community Partnership Grant Program, Zero Waste Washington supported a plastic pollution 10-week session from April to June. Tere Carral with BridgeLatino conducted focus groups with the youth and taught them about surveying and polling. Mario Zavaleta and Martha Sanchez of Latino NW Communications taught interviewing, storytelling, videotaping and editing techniques, resulting in three amazing youth-led videos about plastics and waste reduction.



Youth corps member showing off his trophy and stipend check at graduation

Gallery of photos from the spring cohort



First day of filming at South Park Community Center



Laughing at a funny moment captured on camera



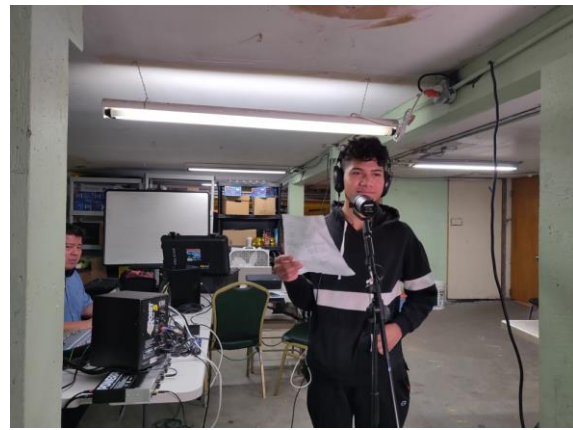
Touring the King County South Treatment Plant and learning about waste water



Youth gathering all litter collected at South Park Skate Park cleanup



Youth talking to City officials to ask for assistance in litter prevention



Youth member recording lyrics to rap music video



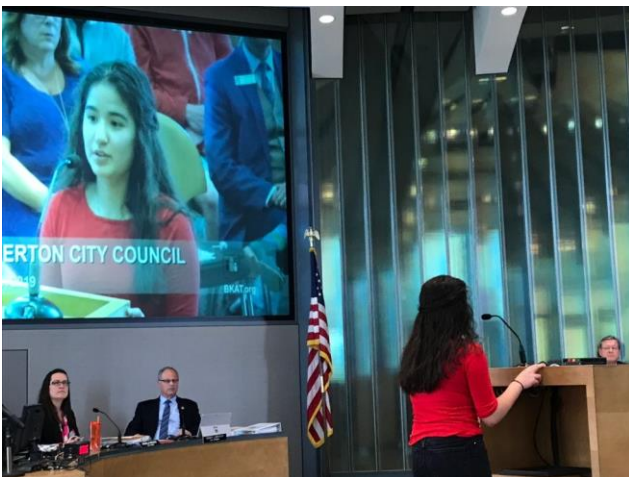
Youth quantifying, categorizing, and weighing litter from clean-up



Youth recording waste prevention messaging

For more information about the Duwamish youth projects, please contact Marisol at marisol@zerowastewashington.org.

Addressing single-use plastics at the local level



Work continues this summer to support local efforts to pass reusable bag and take-out food container ordinances in cities and counties in Washington. Bremerton City Council passed a plastic bag ordinance on June 5th and Kitsap County and Port Orchard are poised to take votes on bag ordinances next week and later this summer. Efforts are underway in Seattle, Bellingham, Anacortes, Kent, Leavenworth, White Salmon, Kirkland, and Tacoma, among other locations.

High schooler giving wonderful, powerful public testimony to the Bremerton City Council on June 5, 2019, about the plastic bag ordinance. Council voted a few minutes later to approve the ordinance 5-2.

State-level action

While a reusable bag bill failed to get to the House floor for a vote in our state legislature last April, the bill's sponsors are eager to bring it back next year. In the meantime, state-wide bag laws have passed in a number of other states including Oregon, Vermont, Maine, Delaware, Connecticut, and New York. Laws to ban styrofoam take-out food containers have passed in Maine, Maryland and Vermont. We all want Washington to be next!

If you are interested in helping work on a local single-use plastic ordinance, please contact Heather at heather@zerowastewashington.org.

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.

Send us your success stories! We'd love to hear them and maybe even include them in a future newsletter.

Donate [here](#)

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