

Zero Waste Washington Spring Quarterly Enewsletter

May 2017

The results are in: survey results give us zero waste guidance

We asked you what you care about and you told us! You, our zero waste community, took the time to fill out a detailed online or mailed survey in February about your opinions and priorities. This valuable information was used by the Zero Waste Washington Board in March to create our program areas for the next two to four years.

For example, plastics – such as microplastics in our waters, excess plastics in packaging, and the difficulty of plastics recycling – is top of mind for many of you. Because of this, we added a new program area to work to prevent plastics pollution. We also will work to promote the redesign of products, including packaging and reduction of contamination in the recycling stream.

In addition, many of you mentioned our concern about toxics in products. We will now have a work program to promote removal of toxic chemicals from products. Toxic chemicals are a problem in terms of exposures during use of the products and especially at the end of use. For example, we don't want to just pass along old sofas that have cushions that are full of toxic flame retardant chemicals (which impact both human health and the health of our pets) to new families. We need to get those flame retardants out of the system!

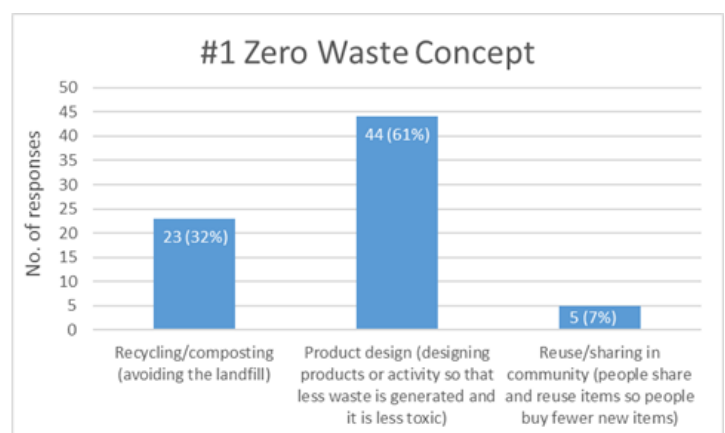
It was a lengthy survey and respondents took the time to share their expertise. Thank you so much!

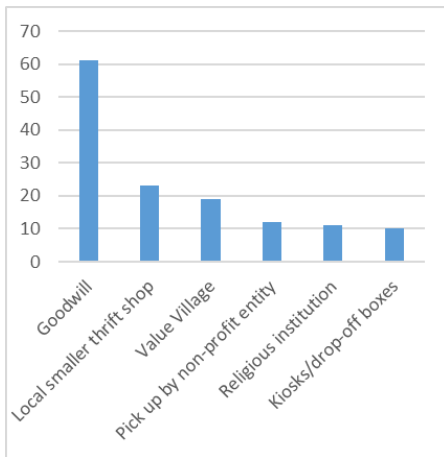
Here is what you said:

The top priority topics identified by respondents were (n=74):

- 91.5% said redesigning products so they can be recycled, composted, or reused at the end of their life
- 90.3%: reducing micro plastics in lakes and marine waters
- 89.0%: increasing producer responsibility policies for products
- 88.9%: reducing disposable plastics (bags, water bottles, polystyrene foam, etc.)
- 86.1%: reducing toxic chemicals in products
- 81.9%: reducing packaging waste
- 80.3%: addressing upstream waste prevention (less waste in the manufacture of products)

In answer to the question – “If I had to choose one zero waste concept as the most important I would pick....” – 64% of our survey participants (n=74) identified **product design** as their top pick (see table)





By far, the most popular way to give away used clothing, toys, furniture and housewares is to donate to **Goodwill** (61 of 73 responses). See table.

The most vexing recycling and composting problems people have at home and work are:

- **Plastics and Single use disposables** **23 responses**
- **Packaging, especially plastic in packaging** **13**
- **Confusion/inconsistent recycling and composting and education** **10**
- **Junk mail (paper and plastic)** **8**
- **Paper, especially at work** **6**
- **And many, many more responses of specific items or topics**

In their city or county, **people wish that their jurisdiction** had curbside recycling, mandated recycling and composting, did better education and reduced confusion, adopted bans on plastic bags and foamed polystyrene food containers, did separation of glass, bought green products, changed their pricing, pushed producer responsibility, had more public recycling bin, established a medication take-back program, reduced toxic products, figured out a way to reduce excess packaging, had more cooperation with other jurisdictions so that there was more consistency, and more!

When asked what Zero Waste Washington should do, respondents (n=57) said:

- **Advocate/Policy work** **32 responses**
- **Educate** **13**
- **Lead/Other** **11**
- **Act as resource** **1**
- **Connect** **1**

Newly defined program areas

In sum, based on the survey results, the Zero Waste Washington program areas decided by our Board are:

- **Promote producer responsibility**
- **Encourage reuse, repair, repurpose and sharing**
- **Help drive markets and reduce contamination**
- **Remove toxic chemicals from products**
- **Promote redesign of products, including packaging**
- **Prevent plastics pollution**
- **Promote innovation**

If you would like to see more:

There were a huge number of thoughtful comments. If you would like to see a detailed copy of the responses, please email Heather at heather@zerowastewashington.org for the full results.

And thank you to everyone for responding. Your answers had a big influence on the development of our program areas.

You are invited: MRF Tour June 8

The Zero Waste Washington community is invited to an exclusive tour of the Recology CleanScapes Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in the SODO area of Seattle on June 8. This recycling processing facility is state of the art and one of the newest built in the US. It is fascinating to see how all of our recyclables get sorted through technologies of optics, gravity and air and more.

Please join us:

WHAT: Exclusive tour of the facility, including presentation and Q and A

DATE: Thursday, June 8, 2017

TIME: 11:30 am -1:30 pm

LUNCH: Included, please let us know your dietary needs

COST: Free

RSVP: <http://zerowastetourmrf.brownpapertickets.com>

This is a guaranteed fascinating experience! After the tour, you will have a really good understanding of how the recycling system works and the challenges. You will be amazed by the new technologies.

More details will be emailed to you after you register.

GiveBIG for zero waste!

On May 10, 2017, Zero Waste Washington is joining more than one thousand nonprofits in raising money to improve Washington communities. We rely on community support to do our work. Please consider making a gift as part of GiveBIG.

Here's how you can help:

1. Schedule your gift to Zero Waste Washington now. You can schedule your gift now and on May 10th your gift will be made automatically. Schedule your gift here.
2. Help us spread the word! Follow us on Facebook. Follow the hashtags #GiveBIG



And a big thank you to our anonymous donor for providing a \$5000 match challenge for GiveBIG!

Now, more than ever, your donation makes a difference.

Legislative updates as we move into special session



Zero Waste Washington's #1 priority at the state legislature this year was SHB 1047 - **the Secure Drug Take-back bill** - which was championed by Representative Strom Peterson. We made significant progress on this bill but it did not make it all the way through. We will try again next year.

While there were many zero waste policy bills that died in committee in February, a few bills moved forward. We continued to work on bills to require **recycling of solar panels** (SHB 1048), **update the electronics product stewardship law** (ESHB 1824), and changes to fees and audits of the **mercury-containing light stewardship program** (SB 5762).

Last week, the 2017 regular session came to a close and the first overtime session began. State leaders will have to negotiate and adopt a new two-year budget and make important decisions on environmental programs and policies.

Environmental Priorities Coalition bills

That means our work isn't done. At the beginning of this year, Zero Waste Washington joined with the Environmental Priorities Coalition came together to pass three ambitious priorities. All three of the Environmental Priorities Coalition's original priorities are still on the table for final session negotiations:

- **Oil Transportation Safety** (HB 1611) will help address a \$3.6 million funding shortfall in state oil spill prevention programs, improve oil spill prevention for Puget Sound, and provide more public input on proposed oil pipeline projects.
- **Protecting All Communities from Toxic Pollution** (HB 2182) stabilizes funding to clean up thousands of toxic sites, prevent and control pollution, and provide grants to support communities dealing with a toxic pollution threat.
- **Water for People, Farms, and Fish** is one of the year's most hotly debated topics focused on providing reliable water supplies for rural homeowners, local farmers, and the rivers and streams.

While we continue to see cuts to environmental programs from the new federal administration, it's more important than ever for state leaders to adopt a new two-year budget that includes environmental and public health programs.

Public Participation Grants

Zero Waste Washington is part of the effort to preserve funding in the operations budget for Public Participation Grants (PPG). We have also served on the rule making committee to help update this important grant-making program so that it will be more available to community and social equity groups with leadership reflecting highly impacted communities.

Public Participation Grants provide funding to persons and nonprofit organizations to encourage public involvement in investigation and cleanup of contaminated sites or to encourage public involvement to eliminate or reduce waste. These grants are a small part of the state budget (1% of the revenue from the Hazardous Substance Tax) but have a big positive impact on the work of nonprofit organizations and community groups to improve human and wildlife health. The grants were authorized when voters passed Initiative 97, the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA), in 1988.

Millions of pounds of TVs and computers collected

In 2016, the **E-Cycle Washington** program collected 36.86 million pounds of TVs, computers and monitors for recycling. This is a significant amount of e-waste that is not going to landfills and is not being transported to other countries as toxic waste. Zero Waste Washington helped pass the e-waste law in 2009 and these significant numbers tell the story of what our members and donors helped accomplish.

In Western Washington, where 78.1% of the state’s population lives, the per capita recycling rate was 5.38 pounds. Eastern Washington, with 21.9% of the population, recycled 4.23 pounds per capita. The statewide per capita average for electronics recycling in 2016 was 5.13 pounds compared to 6.03 pounds in 2015 (see table, below).

Rates of e-waste have been decreasing

After four years of annual increases in volume (2010-2013), 2016 marks the third consecutive year where collections have been lower than the previous year. **E-Cycle Washington** has been operating for eight years and it appears that the program’s year-in-total volume of TVs, computers, monitors, portable DVD players and e-readers recycled peaked in 2013 at 45.18 million pounds. The assumption is that the backlog of old electronics in consumers’ homes and garages has largely been worked through and is now decreasing. Second, the significantly lighter flat screen TVs and monitors now showing up in the recycling stream are having an impact on the total weight of electronics collected and recycled.

E-Cycle Washington’s Eight Year Collection Summary

<u>Year</u>	<u>Lbs. Collected</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>Lbs./capita</u>
2009	38.55	NA	5.78
2010	39.47	2.30%	5.86
2011	42.19	6.90%	6.23
2012	43.47	3.00%	6.33
2013	45.18	3.90%	6.55
2014	44.36	-1.80%	6.37
2015	42.58	-4.00%	6.03
2016	36.86	-13.50%	5.13
Total	332.66 million		

The Washington Materials Management & Financing Authority (WMMFA) has provided a detailed county-by-county breakdown of the December 2016 and year-in-total collection data which can be found on the **E-Cycle Washington** website at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/eproductrecycle/docs/Collections.pdf>.

Looking forward

While Washington State has one of the strongest e-waste programs in the country, there are a few improvements that we would like to see in the law, such as increased transparency, penalties, and monitoring (e.g., tracking devices). In the 2017 legislative session, we advocated for an e-waste bill (ESHB 1824) addressing these fixes but the bill didn’t make it all the way through. We plan to work on the specifics of the bill language with other stakeholders over the summer and look forward to the 2018 legislative session for more action.

Keeping toxic phthalates out of the environment

Phthalates are chemical plasticizers that can be found in all kinds of products, including PVC, furniture, flooring, medical devices, food packaging, pharmaceuticals, inks, personal care products, cosmetics, household cleaning products, clothing, and much more. They are everywhere AND they are associated with numerous health problems, especially reproductive health.

Zero Waste Washington has just launched a project to help to keep phthalates out of the environment. In partnership with King County, City of Tacoma, City of Seattle, WA State Department of Ecology, and others, we are working on a project to identify and reduce the largest sources of phthalates from outdoor products in proximity to two Superfund sites in Puget Sound: the Commencement Bay area in Tacoma and the Duwamish River area in Seattle.

Phthalates have been found in 100% of Americans tested!

We will test outdoor products (such as paint, caulking, traffic cones, etc.) for phthalate concentrations and conduct outreach to businesses and agencies about alternative products that contain low/no phthalates. We want to reduce phthalates going into stormwater, reduce impacts to humans who use the products, and provide information that can be used locally and nationally as we move away from toxic chemicals in products which cause impacts both during use and at end of the life of those products.

Read more about this issue and the project at

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<http://zerowastewashington.org/index.php/campaigns/phthalates>

LightRecycle Washington wins award

LightRecycle Washington, the statewide product stewardship program for mercury-containing lights, [received a King County Green Globe award as a Leader in Product Stewardship](#). Zero Waste Washington helped lead the passage of the law establishing this cutting-edge program in 2010.

With more than 220 collection sites in Washington, including businesses and municipal facilities, LightRecycle has recycled more than two million mercury-containing lights since launching in 2015. LightRecycle is a manufacturer operated product stewardship program run by PCA Product Stewardship Inc., a nonprofit, and overseen by the Washington Department of Ecology under the state's mercury lights law. LightRecycle allows individuals and businesses to recycle up to 10 mercury-containing lights per day at sites throughout Washington – [find a location near you](#).

Taking personal zero waste actions

Do you like to camp in the summer? And does it drive you crazy that you end up with spent propane canisters? There is now a zero waste solution thanks to the Refuel Your Fun program. You can buy re-fillable canisters and get them refilled at participating retailers including REI, Home Depot, Ace Hardware, True Value, U-Haul, and West Marine. The canisters pay for themselves after four uses.

Learn about the program and find a retailer at: <https://refuelyourfun.org>. Help spread the word to more retailers so this program can spread!

Get more zero waste tips on our home page. Our current tips are by our fabulous Board member Meaghan Jones who strives to live a zero waste lifestyle: *Looking to go zero waste for Earth Month? Here are some easy steps you can take in your own life!*



Plastics! Summit coming: September 25

Save the date! In conjunction with partners, Zero Waste Washington will be hosting a one-day forum on the topic of plastics, from upstream sources and products, to contamination problems to microplastics in the marine environment. The keynote address will be delivered by Dr. Peter Ross, a pre-eminent Canadian researcher on marine pollution who is now studying microfibers in our oceans. The date is Monday, September 25, 2017, and the event will be held at the Tukwila Community Center. More details will come in our summer e-newsletter.

Email version:



NEWSLETTER SPRING 2017

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Zero Waste Washington is the public's voice for zero waste. Our members are at the heart of all we do. Your tax-deductible contribution directly supports our tenacious, effective advocacy both for big-picture change and on the ground in our community. [Thank](#)

you!

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