

Zero Waste Washington Spring Quarterly Enewsletter

May 2018

Two new laws: Secure Drug Take-Back Act and Healthy Food Packaging Act

The Washington State legislature enacted two first-in-the-nation, groundbreaking laws in March!

Zero Waste Washington's #1 priority at the state legislature this year was SHB 1047 - the Secure Drug Take-Back Act - which was championed by Representative Strom Peterson (D-Edmonds) and signed into law by the governor on March 22. We put significant resources into helping lead the policy and lobby team. This was a 12-year effort and we want to thank everyone who played a role in helping pass local laws and the state law from supporters to those who did technical and policy work, outreach and education. It was a long haul!

Now all of Washington's residents will have access to secure take-back boxes at local drugstores, medical centers and sheriff's offices where leftover, unused and unwanted medicines can be dropped off for safe disposal. Takeback boxes and the disposal of medicines will be paid for by the pharmaceutical industry.



The statewide law came after years of effort

Leading up the statewide law, Secure Medicine Return ordinances similar to SHB 1047 passed in seven counties: King, Snohomish, Kitsap, Pierce, Clallam, Whatcom and Skagit Counties. The state law passed with significant bi-partisan votes in the house and the senate.

Zero Waste Washington and a broad coalition of agencies and organizations supported these ordinances because of concerns about the opioid epidemic, suicide prevention, children's poisonings, and drugs getting into fish and other wildlife in our rivers, lakes and marine waters.

Other states are now considering passing similar legislation. There are also national efforts underway. We are so proud that Washington was the first state to pass this comprehensive producer responsibility law, once again helping lead the nation.

You are invited to a celebration party: May 12

You are invited to a fun party we are planning to celebrate the passage of the new Washington Secure Drug Take-Back Law. Representative Strom Peterson will be in attendance so that we can thank him as well as thank everyone who worked hard on this issue over so many years.

Here are the details:

WHAT: Celebration Party – afternoon tea – for passage of the WA Secure Drug Take-Back Act

DATE: Saturday, May 12, 2018

TIME: 2-4 pm

WHERE Madrona neighborhood, Seattle

RSVP: Please RSVP to Maria Gámez at maria@zerowastewashington.org or (206) 441-1790

We would love to see you there!

New law banning nonstick chemicals in food packaging

We are also excited that Washington is first state-in-the-nation to ban fluorinated chemicals in food packaging. Zero Waste Washington was a key partner in this effort which was led by Toxic Free Future.

Representative Joan McBride (D-Kirkland) championed this bill which bans the use of the group of toxic chemicals called per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) chemicals in paper food packaging, including in microwave popcorn bags and fast food and cupcake wrappers.

Why are PFAS a problem?

PFAS are persistent. That is, they don't break down for a long time. The Fluorine-Carbon (F-C) bonds they are named for are one of the strongest known in chemistry, and because of this F-C bond they are often referred to as "forever-chemicals" because they do not breakdown easily once they are made. They are associated with numerous health issues for humans and wildlife.

PFAS in compost

Leading up to the state law, Zero Waste Washington partnered with a research team at Purdue University to research PFAS in composts that are provided to residents from commercial facilities in Washington, Oregon, California, Massachusetts and North Carolina. Results of this testing showed that the commercial composts that contain mixed food and yard waste and *compostable food serviceware* had levels of PFAS that are much higher than those without the compostable food serviceware.



This means that our paper plates, pizza boxes, and french fry sleeves are contributing PFAS to the compost that is made from our curbside yard and food waste. The levels of PFAS are high enough to potentially be a concern because the toxic chemicals may move from compost into stormwater or groundwater when it rains, potentially entering drinking water. Further leaching tests are planned and we will keep you updated.

To learn more

To view video about secure medicine takeback: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Po4EblbPr8>

To learn more about the secure medicine issue and the new law, please go here: <http://www.zerowastewashington.org/index.php/medicine-return-legislation-state>

To learn more about the PFAS bill: <http://apps2.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=2658&Year=2017&BillNumber=2658&Year=2017>

GiveBIG is May 9: Early donations are underway

Zero Waste Washington relies on donations from our wonderful zero waste community. Thank you those who have already made **early gifts through GiveBIG** [link]. Two generous donors have teamed up to match all gifts up to \$6000, so your early donation (whether \$250 or \$20) will have twice the impact.

GiveBIG is an annual day of giving that is important for the nonprofit community. We would be so grateful if you can include Zero Waste Washington in your list of organizations this year.

GiveBIG here: [link]



Thank you so much!

Initiative 1631: Addressing climate change

Climate change is a zero waste issue! Did you know that many of the new huge petroleum processing facilities being proposed here and elsewhere in the US are designed to produce plastic resin? Zero Waste Washington is pleased to be a supporter of the **Yes on 1631** campaign because taking action on climate is the imperative for our time.

We have a chance to lead the fight for clean air, clean energy, and stronger communities in Washington. The people of Washington are moving forward with Initiative 1631, the Protect Washington Act. This initiative will create local jobs by investing

in clean energy (for example wind and solar), healthy forests, and clean water projects.

We can accelerate Washington state's transition to clean energy, increasing the resiliency of our state's waters and communities to the impacts of climate change, with a fee on the state's largest corporate polluters.



260,000 signatures are needed by July 1

A broad-base, diverse coalition - the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy - developed the policy [link to https://sos.wa.gov/assets/elections/initiatives/finaltext_1482.pdf] with a united front of organized labor, environmental advocates, communities of color, faith communities, sovereign tribes and many others.

But first, the initiative must qualify for the November ballot. We have 11 weeks to gather over 260,000 signatures from Washington voters. We are out collecting signatures. If you are interested in helping collect signatures, the campaign will send you all the materials you need: https://act.yeson1631.com/signup/please-mail-me-petitions?t=5&akid=362%2E2141%2EIn_OIF

You have a new option for your old latex paint

GreenSheen Paint has come to Washington. You can now take your old, leftover latex paint, for a fee, to over 30 take-back locations as far south as Longview and north to Bellingham. This new program was initiated as part of King County's Take It Back Network.

Up until now, most cities and counties have directed individuals and businesses to dry out left over latex paint with kitty litter or paint hardener and throw it out. Now, you can be part of the system to make new paint!

GreenSheen Paint, founded in Colorado in 2010, has operations in Arizona and now here in Kent, Washington. They make recycled paint using a proprietary technology and sell it across the US at 150 stores, with a big focus of sales at Habitat For Humanity stores, for about \$16 per gallon – a fraction of the cost of new latex paint.



Latex paint, clear coatings and stains are accepted. Oil-based paint, aerosol paint, paint thinner, and cleaning agents are accepted. If you have large quantities of latex paint, you need to drop it off at their facility. For small loads, you can find collections sites near you at 1-800-RECYCLE or greensheepaint.com.



Paint collection events

Cities, counties and organizations are starting to host latex paint collection events. Kirkland had an event on April 14. Attendees dropped off paint for a cash processing fee charged per container (\$1.25/quart, \$2.25/gallon, \$12.25/5-gallon). Organizations can hold events as fundraiser, to support local PTAs and youth sports teams, for example, and can set their own price to recycle paint.

Paint Legislation

Paint stewardship legislation has been introduced at the Washington State legislature for the past several years, but has not made it through. Eight states have laws, including Oregon and California. In those laws, a fee is added to price of paint when the paint is purchased at the store. In these states, there is no charge when you drop off old paint as the transportation and processing costs are paid for by the initial fee.

Zero Waste Washington will be working with other stakeholders for support a strong paint stewardship bill in the 2019 legislative session. The blossoming success of the new GreenSheen program will help demonstrate that Washingtonians would rather recycle than landfill old latex paint. Stay tuned!

Introducing Maria Teresa Gámez



Zero Waste Washington is pleased to welcome Maria Teresa Gámez, who is our new Outreach and Policy Coordinator. We were very sorry to say goodbye to Eva Dale who was a tour de force with the organization for eleven years and is moving on to pursue other projects. Maria is an expert in community projects for conservation and knowledge dissemination.

Prior to joining Zero Waste Washington, she worked on bilingual community projects in North, Central, and South America for over 7 years. In addition, she is a professional filmmaker specializing in

Communication for Development, director and producer of short films, photographic projects, and feature documentaries, focused on conservation and rural and metropolitan features and issues. In her free time, she loves to explore the beautiful mountains of the Pacific NW. Among other initiatives, Maria is heading up our new Fix-It Fairs project in Tacoma, which is in partnership with the Tacoma Tool Library (please see the next article).

Below are reflections from Maria about her impressions of moving to America and her current zero waste project:

I remember coming to the US 10 years ago and being impacted by the way people dispose and consume many different things... Coming from a culture where people tend to repair their things over and over and use them till they are totally worn out, or pass them over to other people if the item still works, caused me a cultural shock. I thought we were wrong and maybe were keeping attachments to things that are not worth it or maybe it was because we weren't as economically advanced as the US was.

It's ironic than now, 10 years later and after moving from the East Coast to the West Coast, I have the opportunity to implement a project about waste reduction... And what is the core idea? Fix-it, don't toss it! Does that mean that we were right and the Americans were wrong? No. It just means we all have a problem everywhere in the world, and that problem is waste. We all waste in different ways but I strongly believe every single culture has something we could adopt to fight this issue. We fix things, some other share, borrow, etc. I hope through this project I get to exchange ideas with as many people as possible. I'm very glad this is happening in communities where diversity is a core value.

– Maria Teresa Gámez

Fix-It Fairs launching in Tacoma

By Maria Teresa Gámez

Do you have an old toaster that has a broken cord? Is your jewelry box malfunctioning? The new Fix-It Fairs in Tacoma are for you! Zero Waste Washington is partnering with The Tacoma Tool Library, **[READ MORE]** the Tacoma Housing Authority, Centro Latino and others to create Fix-It Fairs. These free events are modeled after the popular King County repair cafés but tailored to the unique and diverse communities of Tacoma.

The idea is simple. Residents bring their broken items, sign in, wait for their turn, and then a fixer repairs their electronics, jewelry, toys, furniture, and clothes among other items, **for free**. Sometimes, not every item can be repaired but this is still a great opportunity to build community, to meet neighbors, and to learn more about waste prevention.

Fairs are community-oriented

Residents and community stakeholders have embraced this idea and become part of the process. They have helped us to recruit fixers, to spread the word, and to find the best locations to make the events accessible to every resident.

Our Fix-It Fairs have a workforce development component helping the fixers, some of them recent immigrants, to start their local professional portfolio and to expand their networks in the community.

Right now, we're working to add apprenticeship and zero waste educational components to our fairs. This is a community-based initiative and we want the youth to participate and to bring their input. Reducing resource use and emission of greenhouse gases is everybody's effort.

The project is supported by a Public Participation Grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology.

Come to a Fix-It Fair

We hope you join us. If you don't have any items to get fixed, come have a cup of coffee with us and learn more about what you can do to go zero waste. Children are welcome!

If you are a greater-Tacoma area resident who has experience fixing things and wants to become part of our fixer team, contact Maria at maria@zerowastewashington.org

The first fair is scheduled for June 23rd, 1-4 pm, at the People's Community Center (1602 M.L.K. Jr Way, Tacoma, WA 98405).

Fairs will be scheduled approximately once a month through June 2019, at different locations in Tacoma. Starting in June, please check the schedule at <http://www.tacomatoolibrary.com/>

Washington's E-Cycle marks 10 years

Wow! Over 350 million pounds of computers, TVs and other electronics have been recycled in Washington's E-Cycle program in the last ten years. That is equivalent to the weight of 11,000 recycling trucks. Because of this program, toxic metals have thus been kept of landfills, the environment and dumps in other countries. 26 million pounds of lead recovered.

Zero Waste Washington helped lead the charge to pass the E-Cycle bill in 2009, which was among the first of in the country. It is a product stewardship program in which electronics manufacturers set up and pay for a system to ensure their products are safely recycled at the end of their useful lives, and that toxic chemicals are kept out of the environment.

Helped set the stage for more product stewardship laws

Additional product stewardship laws have been passed for fluorescent lights (20xx), solar panels (2017) and most recently secure medicine return (2018). We have worked with a large number of partners to help promote these bills. There have been amazing legislative champions who have put their hearts into these important issues that help protect human and wildlife health.

It's time to evolve the law

E-Cycle continues to collect millions of pounds of electronics each year. The mix of materials has shifted. The number of old tube TVs and monitors, a large source of lead, are declining and flat screen TVs are increasing.

The time has come to revamp the bill, however, in a variety of ways. For example, the program needs to evolve with new technologies and also include peripherals such as mice, printers and accessories. Zero Waste Washington worked on a bill the two sessions which would have made some improvements (this bill failed to make it through). We look forward to future efforts to update this important law.

To find a recycling location near you: Call 1-800-RECYCLE or go online to 1800recycle.wa.gov.

Plastic pollution efforts ramping up

Plastics pollution was the focus of the [national Earth Day network](#), this year! This reflects the huge amount of new public attention on micro- and macro-plastics in our rivers, lakes, and oceans.

We are thrilled. We need all the help we can get to reduce the use of plastic one-use disposable items like plastic bags, foamed polystyrene and other to-go ware, water bottles, and more.

If you are interested in helping reduce plastic pollution in your city, let us know! There are currently 15 bag ordinances in place at cities and counties in the state. Zero Waste Washington is helping support community members establish new ordinances in 15 cities and counties. We are also gearing up to help work on Food Serviceware ordinances (i.e., foamed polystyrene bans). If you would like to help and find out more, please contact Kyla Wilson at kyla@zerowastewashington.org or Heather Trim at heather@zerowastewashington.org.

Litter assessments

Zero Waste Washington has launched a new project to help coordinate and support the many community science groups, nonprofits, scout troops, school groups, and other civic groups that do litter cleanups and creek monitoring. We need to fill a big data gap: quantifying the amount and sources of plastics getting into our waters and flowing down into our Sound and ocean.

We are working with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help test their new trash assessment protocol across the state. Many, many groups are participating and we would love for your group to join in! We will provide help.

If you are interested in helping test the new protocol with your group and help us create baseline litter data for your geographic area, we would love to hear from you! Please contact Heather at: Heather@zerowastewashington.org.

Email version:

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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!**

[Make a donation](#)