

Zero Waste Washington 2021 Year in Review



GROUNDBREAKING PLASTIC POLLUTION AND RECYCLING BILL PASSED

In spite of the pandemic, our Washington State legislators were highly productive on a number of zero-waste related bills:

#1 PRIORITY: SB 5022 – Styrofoam ban, Foodware accessories opt-in, and mandated recycled content: Senator Mona Das and Representative Liz Berry (shown in photo below, with Governor Jay Inslee, at the bill signing at the Seattle Aquarium) led the charge on a bill that Zero Waste worked on with our many partners across the state to reduce single-use plastic items, revamp our recycling system and reduce plastic pollution.



- ✓ Washington became the 6th state to adopt a statewide ban on expanded polystyrene products. Our bill is the most far-reaching yet. Washington is the first in the nation to **ban foam coolers, in addition to packing peanuts and food service products** such as hinged clamshells, plates and cups.
- ✓ It's exciting that Washington became the **first** state to require customers be given single-use utensils, straws, cup lids and condiments only upon request, starting January 1, 2022. The law applies to most food establishments, including 3rd party delivery.
- ✓ Finally, SB5022 mandates **minimum post-consumer recycled content** for certain products, helping drive the market for recycled plastic resin.

And, looking forward to 2022, we are tee'ing up a major bill for the next legislative session (again to be led by Sen Das and Rep Berry), with recycling targets, a packaging product stewardship program, recycled content mandates, and more. Stay tuned....

OTHER BILLS: We also supported a suite of other zero waste-related bills which passed this year:

- ✓ Allowing the use of wheat straw in recycled content paper carryout bags
- ✓ Establishing a program to connect neighboring industries to use each other's leftover energy and waste
- ✓ Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from fluorinated gases used in commercial refrigerators
- ✓ Testing for lead in drinking water at schools
- ✓ Improving some of the requirements for drug take-back programs



TACKLING METHANE... BY INCREASING COMPOSTING AND REDUCING FOOD WASTE

Rotting food waste and yard debris at our landfills is a huge source of methane, which is actually a much more potent greenhouse gas than CO₂, in a much shorter lifespan. Zero Waste Washington interviewed over 60 experts and assessed our State's current system of managing this organic material. In May, we published the resulting report with 37 policy recommendations and are now working with a wide-ranging group of stakeholders to develop policies to reduce, divert and compost organics. We are looking forward to the leadership of Representative Joe Fitzgibbon and Senator Mona Das on a package of policies in 2022 and 2023 to dramatically reduce methane.

RAMPING UP OUR REPAIR ECONOMY

The best zero waste thing you can do? Don't buy it in the first place!

This year, we made major advancements to help nurture the **Repair Economy** in Washington, including developing and testing messages, creating a brand new repair-finder interactive statewide map (www.repaireconomywa.org), and launching new initiatives to fix and restore furniture to meet the specific needs of recent immigrant families. We are working to support the many wonderful tool libraries, fix-it organizations, and maker spaces in the state through network-building and convening meetings.



FABULOUS NEW VIDEOS PRODUCED BY DUWAMISH VALLEY YOUTH

In partnership with the Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition, we completed two projects with the Duwamish Valley Youth Corps. While learning job preparedness and developing leadership, the students assessed litter, **created educational videos about waste prevention and plastic pollution**, and did community outreach about reducing plastic.