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## PreCycle Innovation Challenge winners announced

*Student and Startup Business teams competed for the top awards*

SEATTLE: This afternoon, during the Final Round judging for the PreCycle Innovation Challenge 2022, six prize winners were selected for their business ideas that advance Washington's circular, regenerative, and just economy.

Winner of the Startup Business track was **Origin Straws**. Origin Straws sells a natural drinking straw to local bars and restaurants. Their straw material is a byproduct of wheat harvesting made from the stem of wheat plants. The straws are fully compostable, do not get soggy, and can be used for hot and cold drinks.

Startup Business Runner-up team was **Ground2Ground Glass**. Based in Walla Walla, Ground2Ground Glass is working to reuse glass wine bottles by crushing them so that the resulting glass sand can be used for road bed, filtration, pathways and more.

Winner of the Student track was **Just Right Bite**. Based in Seattle, Just Right Bite is a female-owned company founded in 2021 while on the hunt for a solution to help with dog allergies. Just Right Bite makes pet snacks from insect protein, produced locally in Washington.

Student Runner-up team **Better Baby Bottles** aims to create stainless steel baby bottles that attach to mainstream breast pumps, instead of plastic bottles. They integrate with popular pump brands, are fully recyclable, and are 40% lighter than equivalent glass bottles.

Audience favorite prizes went to student team **Just Right Bite** and business startup team **Ground2Ground Glass**.

**PreCycle Innovation Challenge 2022** drew teams from around the region to participate in a six week program which included technical assistance and mentoring from experts related to the team's project and a series of online workshops (e.g., basic financials, circular business models, pitch preparation, etc.). The judging panel was an independent group of Washington-based experts.

Pitch competition coincided with the Circular Innovation Summit that highlighted presentations from practitioners and innovators in the Washington circular economy ecosystem, panel discussions with public sector leaders on circular economy initiatives at a state level, and more.

The PreCycle Innovation Challenge and Summit was made possible in part by funding from the Washington Department of Ecology, Seattle's Office of Economic Development, Impact WA, WorkTank, Port of Seattle, Seattle Public Utilities, King County, Washington Recycling Development Center, King County, and Washington State Microenterprise Association.

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