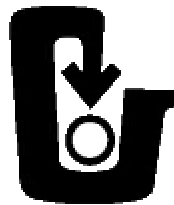




Biennial Report to the Legislature

State Litter Program Activity



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December 22, 2000

TO: The Honorable Karen Fraser, Chair
Environmental Quality & Water Resources Committee
Washington State Senate

The Honorable Kelli Linville, Co-Chair
The Honorable Gary Chandler, Co-Chair
Agriculture and Ecology Committee
Washington State House of Representatives

FROM: Cullen Stephenson, Manager
Ecology Solid Waste & Financial Assistance Program

SUBJECT: Report to the Legislature – State Litter Program Activity

In the spring of 1998, the Legislature passed the 1998 Litter Act (Second Substitute House Bill 3058, amending Chapter 70.93 Revised Code of Washington). The legislation requires the Department of Ecology (Ecology) to provide the Legislature with a report summarizing litter activities each biennium. This report provides information on litter activities during the 1999-2001 Biennium. Here are some highlights.

- Almost 5 million pounds of litter and illegally dumped materials were collected in the first half of the biennium through the combined efforts of the Ecology Youth Corps, Department of Corrections, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Transportation, and the Community Litter Cleanup Program [an unprecedented amount].
- The first litter survey report since 1990 was released, indicating that the litter problem is increasing.
- Ecology is poised to coordinate a litter prevention strategy between state agencies, local governments and businesses that pay the litter tax.

Please call me with any questions and concerns. My number is (360) 407-6103. Thank you.

Report to the Legislature Summarizing State Litter Program Activity 1999-2001 Biennium

Introduction

In the spring of 1998, the Legislature passed the 1998 Litter Act (Second Substitute House Bill 3058, amending Chapter 70.93 Revised Code of Washington). The legislation requires the Department of Ecology (Ecology) to provide the Legislature with a report summarizing litter activities by state agencies in December of even numbered years.

Increased concern over the litter problem was brought to the forefront in 1997 when Ecology convened a Litter Task Force to examine the effectiveness of litter control in Washington State as it is carried out in accordance with the Waste Reduction, Recycling and Model Litter Control Act (RCW 70.93). Several recommendations were made for improving the existing system and moving toward a standard of zero litter throughout the state. These recommendations were presented to the 1998 State Legislature and formed the basis of the 1998 Litter Act.

Ecology's work during 1999 and throughout 2000 has focused on continued implementation of the legislation including:

- Administering allocations from the Litter Account;
- Coordinating statewide litter activities;
- Monitoring statewide litter programs;
- Deploying the Ecology Youth Corps; and
- Conducting the biennial litter survey.

Administration of the Litter Account

The Waste Reduction, Recycling and Litter Control Account (WRRLCA) is funded through a litter tax imposed on industries whose products are related to the litter problem (see Chapter 82.19 Revised Code of Washington). The legislation provides clear direction on how litter funds are to be allocated; twenty percent is to provide funding to local communities, thirty percent is to fund Ecology's waste reduction and recycling efforts, and fifty percent is to fund litter cleanup efforts. Besides funding the Ecology Youth Corps, the fifty percent dedicated to cleanup funds litter activities carried out by the other state agencies.

Ecology is responsible and accountable for administering state agency allocations of WRRLCA funds. A central coordinator within Ecology works cooperatively with other state agencies (Parks and Recreation Commission and the Departments of Corrections, Natural Resources, Transportation, and Revenue) to develop programs and monitor their progress and results. By centralizing management of the fund, litter collection and prevention efforts are better coordinated and more efficient. Ecology has improved accountability through development of performance measures to guide future expenditure of litter funds and quantify accomplishments.

Ecology's statewide litter coordinator tracks progress in litter prevention and pickup, manages the budgeting process for litter programs, and serves as a central resource for collecting and sharing litter information. A key function of the position has been to coordinate cleanup efforts statewide. An effort to coordinate with other state agencies was accomplished through formation of a state agency work group. Ecology dedicated \$1,097,000 to other state agencies for litter activities in the 1999-2001 biennium, executed through interagency agreements.

In the 1999-2001 biennium, there was approximately \$12.0 million in the litter fund and a \$3.8 million fund balance. The Legislature appropriated \$13.4 million, leaving a fund balance of approximately \$2.4 million. Ecology was provided \$2.5 million for a local government funding program, \$4.1 million for waste reduction and recycling activities and \$6.8 million for **state** litter pickup activities. A total of \$1,097,000 of Ecology's litter cleanup money went to other state agencies. The table below illustrates the distribution of litter funds.

1999-2001 WRRLCA Distribution		
Dept. of Ecology	Litter Control/Prevention Activities	
	Ecology Activities	\$5,756,000
	Dept. of Natural Resources	\$ 497,000
	Dept. of Corrections	\$ 492,000
	Dept. of Transportation	\$ 78,000
	Parks & Recreation Commission	\$30,000
	Litter Control/Prevention Total	\$6,853,000
	Waste Reduction & Recycling	\$4,112,000
	Local Government Funding	\$2,466,000
Total Ecology Appropriation		\$13,431,000

Coordination of Litter Activities

The Legislation directs Ecology to serve as the coordinating and administrating agency for all state agencies and local governments receiving funds for waste reduction, recycling and litter control. In the past, Department of Ecology Youth Corps, Department of Corrections (Corrections), Department of Transportation (DOT) and Adopt-a-Highway groups picked up litter. With the addition of Community Litter Cleanup Program (CLCP) crews in 1998, more litter cleanup crews were on the roads than ever before. Facilitating communication and cooperation between programs was more important than ever.

In the spring and early summer 2000, litter coordination meetings were held in each of Ecology's four regions. The goals of the meetings were:

- to facilitate coordination between organizations to achieve the most effective and efficient litter pickup;
- to learn about each organization's litter program;
- to develop litter pickup priorities; and
- to gain information that would help in crew deployment decisions.

The meetings were very well attended by representatives from Ecology, DOT, Corrections, and local government participants in the CLCP program. Pertinent safety and funding issues received top billing, but establishing contacts and finding opportunities for collaboration were also prominent discussion items. The meetings will be continued each year.

Monitoring Statewide Litter Activity

Department of Corrections

The Department of Corrections runs community based correctional litter crews as well as crews based from correctional institutions. These crews pick up litter on state roads, on state lands, and in local communities, providing valuable cleanup service. The interagency agreement between Ecology and Corrections provides funding (\$492,000) for year-round correctional crews in Spokane, Ellensburg, Wenatchee, an administrative position in Seattle, and half-year crews in Monroe and Connell. The table below summarizes the activity of those crews.

**Department of Corrections Litter Removal Activity
July 1, 1999– June 30, 2000**

Hours of work (supervisor and offender)	42,585
Pounds of litter/illegally dumped materials collected	621,062
# of illegal dump sites cleaned	342
Miles of road cleaned	6,185
Acres cleaned	2,203

Department of Natural Resources

The Department of Natural Resources Camps Program, in partnership with Department of Corrections, puts offender crews to work on state lands. The crews focus on removal of illegally dumped materials from state-owned forest, as well as other forest maintenance tasks. The interagency agreement between Ecology and Natural Resources provides funding (\$497,000) for part time crews at the following camps: Naselle, Larch, Cedar Creek, Mission Creek, Indian Ridge, Olympic, and Airway Heights. It also provides money for a vehicle to transport crews. In the summer of 2000, the Indian Ridge facility transferred operations to Monroe. The table below summarizes the activity of those crews.

**Department of Natural Resources Litter Removal Activity
July 1, 1999– June 30, 2000**

Hours of work (supervisor and offender)	22,114
Pounds of litter/illegally dumped materials collected	294,334
# of illegal dump sites cleaned	174
Miles of road cleaned	1,282
Acres cleaned	161

Department of Transportation

The Department of Transportation (DOT) is responsible for picking up litter along state roads including the bags of litter collected by Ecology Youth Corps, Department of Corrections, and Adopt-a-Highway groups. The passage of I-695 resulted in cuts to DOT's maintenance budget, which covers litter activities. Impacts to collection and disposal of litterbags and to

administration of the Adopt-a-Highway program were minimized. The interagency agreement between Ecology and DOT provides funding (\$78,000) to offset the costs of disposal and to purchase trailers. As we enter the next biennium, Ecology will work with DOT to ensure efficient and effective litterbag pickup continues. The table below summarizes the litter work accomplished by DOT crews.

**Department of Transportation Litter Removal Activity
July 1, 1999– June 30, 2000**

DOT Region	Amount of Litter Disposed (Cubic Yards)	Total Pickup Costs (Labor/Equipment)*
Northwest	4,017	\$261,921
North Central	1,084	\$76,660
Olympic	642	\$189,859
Southwest	751	\$251,614
South Central	2,163	\$182,705
Eastern	1,692	\$194,939
Total	10,349	\$1,157,698

*Does not include disposal costs

Parks and Recreation Commission

The Parks and Recreation Commission (Parks) traditionally uses litter funds on waste reduction recycling efforts as well as litter control. Most litter collection is done by park rangers, park users, and volunteers. The interagency agreement between Parks and Ecology provided funding (\$30,000) for specific litter prevention programs at three State Park Environmental Learning Centers. Additionally, the funding was used to offset the cost of disposal of litter and illegally dumped materials. Plastic recycle bin liners and certificates of appreciation for dedicated park volunteers were also purchased.

Community Litter Cleanup Program

The Community Litter Cleanup Program (CLCP) was developed and implemented in 1998 with the goal of providing help to local government with the growing problems of litter and illegal dumps. 1999 represented the CLCP program's first full year of operation, and 40 out of the 41 eligible jurisdictions participated.¹

In calendar year 1999, \$1.31 million was dedicated to the program, with each recipient eligible to receive \$32,000. The table below highlights the work accomplished during calendar year 1999.

Statistics from the Community Litter Program – Calendar Year 1999	
Hours of work (supervisor, offender and volunteer)	159,976
Pounds of litter/illegally dumped materials collected	3,355,000
# of illegal dump sites cleaned	2,662
Miles of road cleaned	28,851
Acres Cleaned	10,567

In September 1999, meetings were held around the state to gather input from interested parties on how the program could operate most effectively. The results from these meetings were used in the revision of the Community Litter Cleanup Program Guidelines.

¹ Solid waste planning jurisdictions are eligible to participate in the program. This includes the 39 counties plus the cities of Seattle and Everett. All participated in 1999 except Asotin County.

\$2,162,999 from the Waste Reduction, Recycling and Litter Control Account was provided for the biennium (FY99-01), with forty-one interagency agreements written for projects beginning in January 2000 through June 30, 2001.

Ecology Youth Corps

Fiscal year 2000 marked the 25th year of operation for the Ecology Youth Corps (EYC). The EYC program continues to be successful in cleaning up roads and public areas, and providing employment for the state's youth.

EYC operates two types of crews: median crews and youth crews. Median crews are composed of young adults 18 years and older who clean complex and challenging areas such as highway median strips, interchanges, and other high traffic areas. The EYC youth crews consist of 14–17 year old youths who clean shoulder areas and interchanges of major state and interstate highways as well as city and county roads, public access areas, school grounds and other public areas.

In fiscal year 2000, crews were based in the following counties: Adams, Asotin, Benton, Chelan, Clark, Douglas, Ferry, Franklin, Grant, Grays Harbor, King, Kittitas, Kitsap, Klickitat, Lewis, Mason, Okanogan, Pacific, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, Spokane, Stevens, Thurston, Wahkiakum, Whatcom, Whitman and Yakima.

Ecology Youth Corps Litter Removal Activity July 1, 1999– June 30, 2000

Pounds of Litter Removed	1,031,880
Miles of road cleaned	5,639
Acres cleaned	2,564

Litter Survey

In 1999, Ecology undertook a litter survey as directed by the Legislature. The goal of the litter survey was to gain information about litter composition, litter generation rates, and littering behavior. This information will help Washington reach its "zero litter" goal, and help Ecology coordinate cleanup efforts and develop better overall litter prevention and control programs. In addition, results of the litter survey will provide baseline information against which to measure progress in litter reduction.

Results published in June 2000 estimated that 16 million pounds of litter accumulate on state roadways each year. Six million additional pounds of litter accumulate in public areas, such as state and county parks and recreation areas. The study also found that when asked, most people think of litter as paper, aluminum cans, and fast food waste. The Litter Study revealed that the problem goes beyond those assumptions. Glass beverage containers, construction and demolition waste, organic materials such as yard debris, and tires play a prominent role in the litter stream by weight.

Future Activities

The 1999-2001 biennium has been a period of stabilization for Washington State’s litter programs. The Community Litter Cleanup Program entered its third year and the state agencies received biennial litter funding through Ecology via interagency agreements. Communication and coordination between litter programs improved, leading to more efficient and effective litter cleanup statewide.

In the fall of 2000, Ecology submitted a consolidated budget request on behalf of the users of the Waste Reduction Recycling and Model Litter Control Account (WRRLCA). We anticipate that funding levels for the Community Litter Cleanup Program and state agency litter programs will remain stable. The table below shows the projected appropriation and distribution of the WRRLCA for the 2001-2003 biennium, based on the budget request submitted to the Office of Financial Management.

Projected 2001-2003 WRRLCA Distribution	
Litter Control/Prevention	\$6,716,000
Waste Reduction & Recycling	\$4,029,000
Local Government Funding	\$2,687,000
Total Ecology Appropriation	\$13,432,000

Results from the litter survey provided evidence that cleanup activity will not get us to the zero litter goal without a significant prevention effort. Ecology is committed to working with local governments, business and industry, and our state agency partners to pursue a prevention strategy while maintaining levels of cleanup activity. **The biggest challenge for the 2001-2003 biennium will be maintaining cleanup activities while shifting resources to litter prevention activities.** With stakeholder input, Ecology reviewed the results and recommendations of the litter study and is currently developing a litter prevention strategy. The prevention strategy will consider use of media, enforcement and educational tools. Possible initiatives include:

- A hard-hitting media campaign to raise the public’s awareness of the negative financial, environmental and social effects of littering;
- A renewed emphasis on implementation of litter laws and penalties by law enforcement agencies; and
- Inclusion of anti-litter messages in waste prevention educational materials.