

State Solid and Hazardous Waste Plan Update

Who We Heard From:

Comments were gathered via meetings with groups or individuals, emails, phone calls and an online survey. More than 100 pages of comments total were received from:

- 36 local government solid waste advisory committees (SWACs) or staff
- 4 state agencies
- 2 collection companies
- 1 federal government group (EPA)
- 1 other government staff (Sound transit)
- 3 non-governmental organizations
- 2 industry associations
- 10 business groups or staff
- 4 citizens surveys
- 20 anonymous surveys
- Ecology Staff

Comments Covered the Following Topics:

- Finance & Grants
- Data, Measurement & Goals
- Education / Outreach / Technical Assistance
- Organics
- Recycling & Markets
- Construction & Demolition Debris
- Infrastructure & Transportation
- Waste Disposal & Waste to Energy
- Regulations, Enforcement & Definitions
- Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission
- Local Plans
- Urban & Rural Issues
- Roles & Responsibilities (Local, State, Private Industry)
- Moderate Risk Waste / Toxics/ Hazardous Waste
- Environmentally Preferred Purchasing (EPP)
- Products & Producer Responsibility
- Sustainable Materials Management
- Waste Hierarchy: Prevention & Reuse
- Climate Change / Environmental Concerns/ Life Cycle Approach
- Big Picture Thinking
- Equity & Diversity
- State Plan Scope & Structure

A longer summary is available <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/SummaryPages/1407014.html>. Below is a short synopsis of key comments received.

Some Key Issues:

Finance

- New and better funding mechanisms, more money for all parts of system, more research, look at true costs (defined in many ways), ideas provided include taxes, incentives, fees

Education / Communication / Information/ Technical Assistance

- More and clearer communication and technical assistance. Education for K-12 education, public, businesses, and local government staff statewide. Use social marketing, social media. Collection companies should provide more education. Topics include recycling – how to do it, where it goes – household hazardous waste, and toxics in products.

Data and Measurement

- What and how we measure, better facility reports, share more data, clarify recycling vs. diversion, set clear targets and goals, address contamination, consistent local government reporting, do another waste characterization study.

Toxics / Moderate Risk Waste (MRW)

- Move upstream –focus on safer product design, green chemistry, and alternative assessments. Update lists of chemicals. Prioritize materials to address. MRW funding scarce, infrastructure not available statewide.

Urban and Rural issues – “one size does not fit all”

- Acknowledge diversity of the state and the challenges faced by smaller areas. Provide rural areas with assistance and flexibility. Don't force things on them – no unfunded mandates.

Address current system

- Include disposal and other infrastructure in plan; acknowledge the franchise system.

Recycling needs work

- Address consistency, residuals and contamination, glass, plastics. What is collected vs. actually recycled? Lack of confidence in recycling due to single-stream contamination. Improve recycling markets.

Products and Producer Responsibility

- Support for more producer responsibility, especially for toxics, pharmaceuticals, but also carpet, packaging, bottle bill. Require producers to design safer products and use recycled content. Ban wasteful products.

Support Waste Hierarchy

- More focus on waste reduction, prevention, and reuse.

Big Picture Thinking

- Keep and build on climate connection and sustainable materials management. Look at upstream impacts and solutions; look to other states and countries.
- Improve clarity, promote consistency, provide flexibility, and set some baseline standards.

Additional Common Issues:

- Increase partnerships and coordination. Collaborate more with current partners.
- Food waste – more focus on prevention, reuse, compost, digesting, etc.
- More organics technology, such as anaerobic digestion, bio-fuels, etc.
- Compost contamination, including bio-plastics.
- Recycling and waste definitions.
- Ecology's role – lead, set some standards, baseline, address statewide issues and policy change.
- Regulations – more, less, consistent, better, no unfunded mandates!
- Construction & Demolition and sham recycling needs more attention.
- Support and acknowledge waste-to-energy.
- Work with Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission to improve recycling and tracking and to increase consistency.
- Infrastructure – fund it, need more, upgrade, have in place before you push programs.
- Environmentally Preferable Purchasing – public and agency, better products, with better info.
- Equity - serve diverse populations better.

How We Will Use These Comments:

These comments will help as we draft new plan actions and content. A draft document will be made available for additional stakeholder input later in 2014.

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