



1997-1999 Biennial Report to the Legislature

State Litter Program Activity Summary

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1997-1999 Biennial Report to the Legislature Summarizing State Litter Program Activity

Executive Summary

The 1997-1999 biennium brought many changes to Washington State's litter programs. The passage of the 1998 Litter Act placed Ecology in a new leadership role in coordinating the cleanup and prevention of litter statewide. The legislation directs the Department of Ecology (Ecology) to coordinate litter activities between state agencies and local governments to improve effectiveness and efficiency. Ecology, other state agencies, and local communities have made great progress in implementing the legislation and are committed to moving towards the zero litter goal for Washington State, established in the legislation. Some significant activities include:

- 1. Litter Cleanup** – Litter cleanup activities reached an unprecedented level, with Ecology Youth Corps picking up **three times** the number of bags from last biennium (from 44,360 bags to 145,318 bags).
- 2. Funds to Local Governments** – Ecology developed the Community Litter Cleanup Program, quickly and effectively distributing funds to 38 local communities to enhance cleanup of litter in areas around the state.
- 3. Coordinating with State Agencies** – Ecology began coordinating litter activities with other state agencies by convening a state agency work group. This work group has addressed questions such as how to standardize reporting criteria. In fiscal year 1999 Ecology distributed \$504,000 (originally dedicated to the EYC budget) to other state agencies to expand litter pickup programs statewide.
- 4. Litter Survey** – Ecology began work on a statewide litter survey in the summer of 1998. Cascadia Consulting Group of Seattle is under contract to help design and implement the survey, the first in the state since 1990. The goals of the survey are to gain information about litter composition, generation rates, and littering behavior. The information will be used to target cleanup efforts and develop prevention strategies.

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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 required the Department of Ecology (Ecology) to provide the Legislature with a report summarizing litter activities for the biennium. This report presents Ecology's progress to date on implementing the legislation and includes information on state litter programs and how Ecology began coordination of litter activities.

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 Progress in Implementing the New Legislation

Ecology's work in 1998 focused on implementing the changes prescribed by the new legislation. The legislation made Ecology responsible and accountable for administering state agency allocations of litter tax funds. It also called for a central coordinator within Ecology to work 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 will be better coordinated and more efficient. Ecology also plans to improve accountability through development of performance measures to guide future expenditure of litter funds and quantify accomplishments.

In July a new statewide litter programs coordinator was hired. The coordinator will track progress in litter prevention and pickup, manage the budgeting process for litter programs, and serve as a central resource for collecting and sharing litter information. A key function of the new position will be to coordinate cleanup efforts statewide. Efforts to coordinate with other state agencies began this summer. Through an interagency agreement process, Ecology distributed \$504,000 to the other state agencies to augment litter clean-up activities in fiscal year 1999. Ecology staff worked with the agency

representatives to begin development of standard reporting items, forms, and a database to track litter activities.

We are on the right track to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of litter cleanup activities. In a short time, lines of communication between Ecology, Department of Transportation, state and local corrections agencies, and local governments, have been established. Representatives from other state agencies involved have commented on improved coordination and how it has led to unprecedented amounts of litter being picked up. The unfortunate news is that, despite all the extra effort of statewide litter crews, litter continues to be prevalent in many areas. While the momentum of cleanup efforts will continue into the next biennium, it will be impossible to keep pace with the amount of litter being generated. Clearly, prevention strategies must be coupled with cleanup efforts to reduce the amount of litter generated in Washington.

Funding

The Waste Reduction, Recycling and Litter Control Account 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 provided clear direction on how litter funds are to be allocated in the 1999-2001 biennium; 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 clean-up efforts. Besides funding the Ecology Youth Corps, the fifty percent dedicated to clean-up efforts will fund litter activities carried out by the other state agencies.

In the 1997-1999 biennium, there was approximately \$12 million in the litter tax fund. The Legislature appropriated \$10.90 million from the litter tax fund, with \$584,000 going directly to other state agencies. The fund balance of about \$1 million was unappropriated. Ecology was provided \$2.06 million for a local government funding program, \$3.09 million for waste reduction and recycling activities and \$5.15 million for litter pickup activities. A total of \$856,000 of Ecology's litter cleanup money went to other state agencies.

1997-1999 Litter Tax Fund Distribution		
Dept. of Ecology	EYC (litter cleanup)	\$4,302,000
	Waste Reduction & Recycling	\$3,094,800
	Local Government Funding	\$2,063,200
	Sub-total Ecology Programs	\$9,460,000
Dept. of Corrections	Pass through from Ecology (litter cleanup)	\$352,000
Other Agencies	Additional \$\$ to State Agencies* (litter cleanup)	\$504,000
Ecology Appropriation (total)		\$10,316,000
Parks & Recreation	Direct Appropriation	\$34,000
Dept. of Natural Resources	Direct Appropriation	\$450,000
Dept. of Revenue	Direct Appropriation	\$100,000

Total Appropriation		\$10,900,000
Unappropriated		\$1,000,000
Total		\$11,900,000

**Originally this money was allocated to EYC. Ecology identified these funds as excess and distributed them to other state agencies. More detail is provided on page six.*

Statewide Litter Survey

The new legislation directs Ecology to conduct a statewide litter survey, which is to be used to guide prevention and cleanup efforts. In August 1998 Ecology entered into contract with Cascadia Consulting Group of Seattle, to assist in the design and implementation of a statewide litter survey. The goal of the survey is to gain information about litter composition, generation rates, sources of litter, litter behavior, and the characteristics of persons who litter. This information will help us to develop performance measures, target cleanup efforts, and develop prevention strategies.

The litter survey is composed of four parts. In the planning phase, the survey design team identified the goals and objectives of the survey, designed a site selection methodology, consulted with Washington's litter control experts, developed a sampling criteria and procedures, and conducted training sessions for those participating in the survey work. In the site-sampling phase, litter crews will visit 200 sites statewide; map each site; and collect, sort, and weigh the litter deposited. In the third phase, the contractor will conduct focus groups and telephone surveys of Washington residents to learn about littering behavior, what motivations exist, and how littering can be prevented. The final phase will consist of analysis of all data collected and the presentation of a final report in late 1999.

The litter survey is a year long process. Since August 1998, Ecology has worked with Cascadia Consulting to develop a methodology and select the actual survey sites. The sites will be initially cleaned and then revisited twice (at approximately 4 month intervals) to measure the litter that has accumulated. It is important to note that unlike previous surveys, this litter survey will not result in an overall generic litter rate for the state. Instead, it will provide more detailed information about certain areas in the state, such as county roads, highway interchanges or state recreation areas.

Funding For Local Communities

Ecology was directed to provide \$2.06 million in funding to local governments for litter cleanup efforts this biennium. With guidance from the Litter Task Force, Ecology developed a program offering contracts of up to \$30,000 through each county and the cities of Everett and Seattle. These are the local solid waste planning jurisdictions.

The first round of funding for the Community Litter Cleanup Program was advertised broadly, including distribution of information letters to all city and county officials, state Solid Waste Advisory Committee members, local corrections officials, and Litter Task

Force members (2,500 letters total) in January 1998. Eight information workshops were held statewide in March and attracted representatives from all counties, several cities, and state and local corrections agencies. The workshops were conducted in partnership with staff from the Department of Corrections and the Executive Director of the Jail Industries Board.

Interagency agreements for the first round of agreements total approximately \$1,100,000. Thirty-eight out of forty-one eligible applicants have received funding. Local and/or state corrections crews are participating in thirty-four of these projects to clean up litter and illegal dumps. In addition, several local governments have partnered with volunteer groups and civic organizations to clean up parks, local trails, state forests and other public areas. The communities have been very resourceful in leveraging the funds with local funds and donated goods and services.

A second round of Community Litter Cleanup Program funding is being offered for calendar year 1999. The application period opened November 1, 1998, and projects may begin as early as January 1, 1999. Eligible applicants may apply for up to \$32,000 to conduct litter and illegal dump cleanup projects.

Formal reports from program participants are due in February 1999, but preliminary reports indicate that the program is an overwhelming success. Based on data reported to date, over 1 million pounds of litter was collected from 2,600 road miles, 1,300 acres, and 228 illegal dumpsites. Ecology has also received reports on the less tangible benefits of the program. For example in Clallam County, medium-security inmates, who otherwise would have been idle in jail, have been put to work. The supervisor of the program reports the inmates have developed a work ethic and a sense of pride in service to the community. In Island County, volunteers have united to clean local beaches, building a sense of community and stewardship.

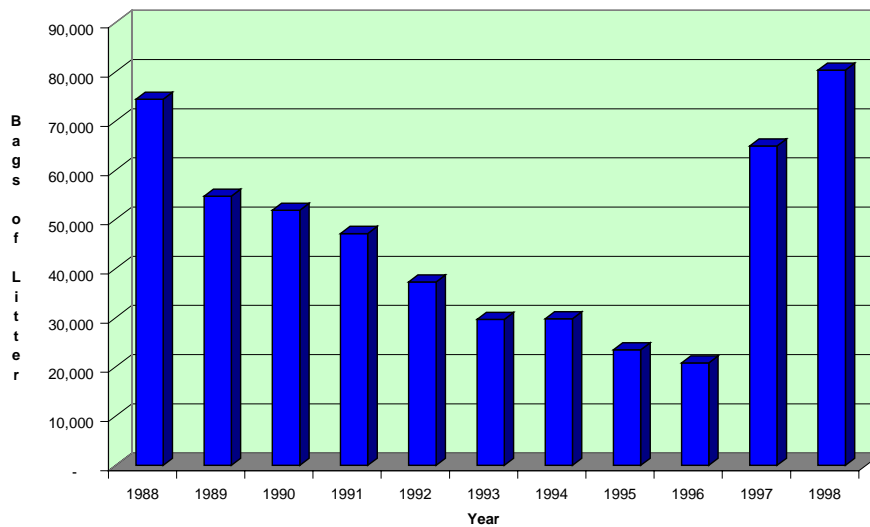
Ecology Youth Corps

Due to a concern over the increased amount of litter on the state's highways, Ecology examined and refocused the Ecology Youth Corps program (EYC). With additional funding, Ecology made some immediate changes in the EYC program. Spring, summer, and fall median crews that focused on medians, interchanges, and on/off ramps were added, as were additional traditional summer crews that worked road shoulders and public access areas.

The EYC program continues to be a success in cleaning up roads and public areas, and providing employment for the state's youth. In 1997, fifty-two crews were deployed and in 1998, sixty crews were deployed. In addition to their usual duties, the 1998 fall median crews took on the additional task of assisting with the statewide litter survey. A total of 10,627 hours to date have been devoted to the survey project. Supervisors and crewmembers assisted with mapping and measuring sites as well as cleaning (litter pickup). The table and graph on the next page list some EYC statistics and illustrate EYC's ten-year performance history. Please note that the statistics are presented in calendar years.

EYC Total Output for CY1997-1998			
	1997	1998	Total
Total Bags Litter	64,947	80,371	145,318
Road Miles Cleaned	5,900	7,781	13,681
Acres Cleaned	1,038	755	1,793
Bags Recycled	8,679	10,651	19,330
Total lbs recycled	92,937	106,521	199,458

**Ecology Youth Corps
Litter Pick-Up Trends 1988 - 1998**



*This chart does not include litter picked up by Adopt-A-Highway or other agencies.

Other State Agency Efforts

This biennium, the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Departments of Natural Resources and Revenue received a total of \$584,000 in direct litter fund appropriations from the Legislature. The Department of Corrections received pass-through funding of \$352,000 from Ecology (see page 3).

For fiscal year 1999, Ecology provided an additional \$504,000 from the EYC budget to other state agencies involved in litter cleanup activities, with the intent of expanding cleanup efforts. The interagency agreement process provided all the agencies an opportunity to learn about each other's work and set the groundwork for better coordination of cleanup efforts in the future. The agreements provide for accountability by requiring the state agencies to report quarterly on the expenditure of funds and activities. The additional funding was not available to the agencies until late in the first quarter of the fiscal year, so the first activity reports will be due in January 1999. The table below shows how the funds were distributed.

1997-99 Litter Funds to State Agencies other than Ecology			
Agency	Biennial Appropriation	Additional funding from Ecology EYC \$\$	Pass-through \$\$ from Ecology
Natural Resources	450,000	70,000	
Parks & Recreation	34,000	30,000	
Revenue	100,000	4,000	
Corrections	0	300,000	352,000
Transportation	0	100,000	
Total	584,000	504,000	352,000

Total received by other agencies: \$1,440,000.

The five state agencies received a total of \$1,440,000 this biennium for litter.

Department of Corrections

In this biennium, Department of Corrections (DOC) received a total of \$652,000 for litter projects. The DOC provides labor for litter control and cleanup of illegal dumps around the state using the services of community-based offenders performing community service hours and minimum custody inmates. DOC crews operate in various locations throughout the state and are available to both local governments and other state agencies. Work crews are spread across Washington. Litter funds given to DOC are primarily used to pay for crew supervisors and the equipment (tools, clothing and vehicles) needed to perform litter cleanup tasks. DOC began running litter crews in late 1997. In just two months, the crews picked up over 2,000 bags of litter and recyclable cans and cleaned up over 78 miles of road. Litter crew activity continued to grow in 1998, as funding allowed DOC to hire crew supervisors and outfit more crews with necessary equipment. DOC committed to expand work with state agencies and local governments through the interagency agreement signed with Ecology in October 1998.

Partnering between DOC and local governments has proved particularly successful in addressing illegal dumpsites. For example, the city of Seattle provides a list of reported illegal dumps to DOC on a daily basis. In another project with Pacific County, DOC was able to dispose of 75,000 pounds of solid waste collected from ten different illegal disposal locations in just one month (October 1998).

DOC has also invested heavily in a data tracking system that will allow them to carefully account for crew hours, litter collected, and illegal dumps cleaned. DOC and Ecology staff began to develop a formal data reporting system that will be transferable to all agencies involved in litter pickup. Their contribution to statewide litter programs is irreplaceable and Ecology intends to build on the cooperative relationship already established.

Department of Natural Resources

In this biennium, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) received a total of \$520,000 for litter projects. Litter and illegal dumpsites are significant issues on public lands in Washington. Litter funds that DNR received are being used to support corrections camp crew supervisors, costs associated with running litter crews, and disposal fees. The agency has partnered with local groups such as mountain bicycling clubs and adopt-a-trail groups to pick up litter on state lands. In 1997, litter crews collected over 9,000 cubic yards of litter and 1,500 tires from state lands. In the interagency agreement signed with Ecology for fiscal year 1999 activities, DNR agreed to work with DOC to continue to fight the illegal dump problem on state lands.

Parks and Recreation Commission

In this biennium, the Parks and Recreation Commission (Parks) received a total of \$64,000 for litter projects. Parks traditionally uses litter funds on waste reduction and recycling efforts as well as litter control. Most litter collection is done by park rangers, parks users, and volunteers. The additional funds provided to Parks in the interagency agreement with Ecology for fiscal year 1999 activities will be used to defray disposal costs.

Department of Transportation

The Department of Transportation (DOT) did not receive a direct appropriation this biennium, but Ecology provided them with \$100,000 in FY99. The DOT picks up litter as part of its routine highway maintenance responsibility along 7,000 miles of state highways. DOT's two primary litter activities are pickup and disposal of litterbags and administration of the volunteer Adopt-a-Highway program. In 1997, DOT picked up over 23,000 cubic yards of litter, collected by EYC, DOC, and Adopt-a-Highway groups. The funds will be used to purchase some trailers to increase the efficiency of litterbag pickup along the roads and to defray disposal costs.

Department of Revenue

The Department of Revenue (Revenue) received \$100,000 from the Litter Account for administration of the litter tax. In response to concern over the effectiveness of litter tax collection, Revenue launched a taxpayer education program that is expected to improve compliance. The materials inform taxpayers that the litter tax can now be paid at the

same time the business pays its B&O tax. Ecology provided Revenue with \$4,000 to fund the development of educational materials.

Conclusions

The 1997-1999 biennium brought many changes to Washington State's litter programs. The passage of the 1998 Litter Act placed Ecology in a new leadership role in coordinating the cleanup and prevention of litter statewide. The legislation directs Ecology to coordinate litter activities between state agencies and local governments to improve effectiveness and efficiency. Ecology has made great progress in implementing the legislation and is committed to moving towards a zero litter goal for Washington State. Some significant activities include:

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