

Zero Waste Washington Winter Quarterly Enewsletter

March 2, 2020

2020 legislative session winding down – 6 zero waste bills still going strong

This has been quite a year in Olympia! Even though it is a short session (60 days), there were a large number of zero waste bills introduced that advanced. Six great bills are still alive and are moving into the final weeks. And although a batch of bills died, we and our partners will bring them back next year, stronger than ever.

Our highest priority bill – the Reusable Bag Bill (SB5323)

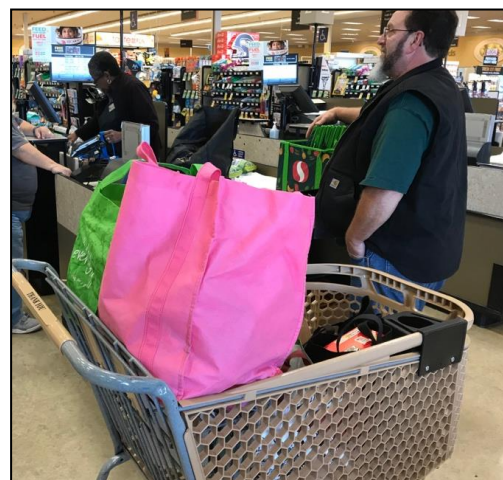
The saga of the bag bill in Washington State continues. After making it halfway last year – passed the Senate but not the House — the bill is now in the final stages of the House process. Prime sponsor Senator Mona Das has worked diligently on the bill, with big assists from Representatives Strom Peterson, Jared Mead and Joe Fitzgibbon in the House. This bill does have strong opposition. We need your help to get it to the finish line in the House and to the governor:

Please click [here](#) to send an email to your two representatives to support the Reusable Bag Bill (SB5323)

The bag bill builds on the 38 local ordinances already in place in Washington, including 13 enacted in 2019 alone! It would ban thin film plastic carry-home bags at all retail establishments. If consumers forget to bring their own bag, they would be able to get a paper bag or a thicker (2.25 mil), reusable film plastic bag for a pass-through charge. This pass-through charge is important because it motivates people to bring their own bag and also helps the stores pay for the bags. For the independent and smaller stores, the cost of paper carry-home bags ranges from 10.5 to 12.5 cents, depending on where the store is located in Washington.

If Washington passes this bill, it will join eight states that have bag laws in place, as well as innumerable countries around the world.

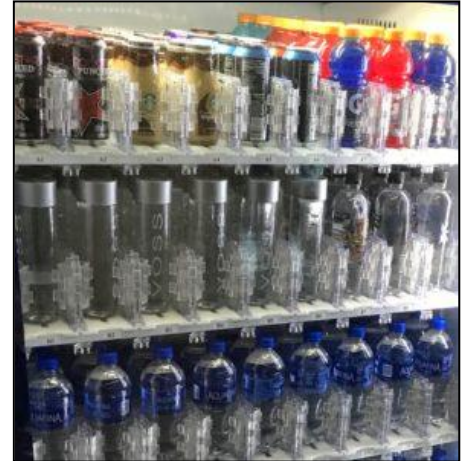
Why it matters? Bags contribute to micro-plastics in our rivers, lakes and marine waters, create litter in the community, and cause major operational problems in our recycling facilities because they clog the sorting machines.



Other terrific zero waste bills moving forward

These bills have all passed out of their house of origin and are eligible now to be pulled for floor votes in the opposite house. For current status see: <https://zerowastewashington.org/legislative-work>

- **Recycled content in beverage containers** (ESHB 2722). As we work to revamp our recycling system, a key need is to strengthen end markets for the materials so that recyclables will have more monetary value. If passed, this bill, championed by Rep. Jared Mead, would be the first in the nation. It would require that beverage containers sold into Washington State have minimum post-consumer recycled plastic content, starting with 10% content in 2021. By 2030, containers would be required to have 50% recycled content.
- **Compost use** (ESHB 2713). Compost is important to help restore soil health and to reduce food waste. In Washington, we want to help improve the financial value of compost by increasing the use of compost. This bill, led by Cedar Grove and prime sponsored by Representative Amy Walen, encourages local governments to determine if compost can be utilized in their projects, and, if so, encourages them to purchase compost (with a priority for local compost). It also, importantly, sets up a 3-year pilot grant program to reimburse farmers for their use of compost. This is a big gap in the current system.
- **Solar panel recycling** (ESHB 2645). This bill, led by Representatives Norma Smith and Sharon Shewmake, fixes loopholes in the existing producer stewardship program for solar modules. The law passed in 2017 only applies to solar panels that are associated with buildings. Major arrays such as solar farms were not included in the original bill. This bill fixes that and a few other technical problems. In addition, because of concerns by the solar industry, this bill delays program implementation by 2 years and establishes a task force to study potential additional adjustments to the program.
- **Nonflushable wipes** (ESHB 2565). Led by the City of Seattle, this bill would require that nonflushable wipes have large labels that make it clear that they cannot be flushed. Consumers are super confused and think that all wipes are flushable. The *nonflushable wipes* are made largely from plastic, causing more plastic to reach the environment. The *flushable wipes* are made from a cellulose-type material but, unfortunately, do not fall apart in the sewage system, leading to clogs. A sewage overflow in Golden Gardens in Seattle last summer was attributed to wipes. This bill, championed by Representatives Joe Fitzgibbon, is an excellent first step and we hope that another state will take it further and address the content of the flushable wipes themselves. Or this might be something to consider during the 2021 session in Washington next year...
- **Industrial waste coordination** (SB 6430). We have so much opportunity here in Washington to use the heat, water and waste materials from different industries as well as public systems (i.e., the heat from sewers) as inputs for adjacent industry. This bill, led by Senator Sharon Brown, requires the Department of Commerce to produce a proposal and recommendations for setting up an industrial waste coordination program. It further authorizes Commerce to make loans or grants and to provide technical assistance for development of projects that encourage and enhance projects to create a cooperative use of waste heat and materials.



Bills that are no more

In a short session, only so many bills can make it through. Not to mention the impact of stiff opposition from industry and other interests.

Here is a listing of the bills. More info can be found here: <https://zerowastewashington.org/legislative-work/>

- **Plastic food service products** (HB 2656) – Reducing waste associated with single-use food service products).
- **Styrofoam Ban** (SB 6213) – Concerning certain expanded polystyrene products.
- **Sharps Product Stewardship** (HB 2360) – Establishing the sharps waste stewardship program
- **Battery Product Stewardship** (HB 2496) – Providing for responsible environmental management of batteries
- **Banning water rights for bottled water** (ESSB 6278) – Concerning water withdrawals for commercial bottled water production
- **Food date labeling** (HB 2651) – Addressing food waste by standardizing labels communicating the freshness or expiration of food
- **Right to Repair** (SB 5799) – Concerning the fair servicing and repair of digital electronic products)



Environmental Priorities Coalition

Zero Waste Washington is part of the Environmental Priorities Coalition. The Coalition is made up of 24 statewide organizations working to safeguard our environment and the health of our communities in the state legislature. For the 2020 legislative session, we have four priorities that are essential for healthy communities and a thriving environment:

- **Reusable Bag Bill** (SB 5323) – See above
- **Clean Fuels Now** (HB 1110/SB 5412)
- **Climate Pollution Limits** (HB 2311)
- **Healthy Habitat Healthy Orcas** (HB 2550)

Partnership Agenda. This agenda supports work that is important for environmental progress being led by partners outside the coalition and include the Extending Apple Health Coverage Until Age 26, Safe Train Crew Size Act, and Voting Justice bills.

Thank you to all the amazing partners

We are grateful to all of our partners who have worked hard on bills this session. Local campaigns will continue and we expect more plastics, recycling and product stewardship bills in next year's session.

Thank you all for your help in moving bills forward so far during this session. And thanks, in advance, for standing with us in 2020 as we continue to advocate for a cleaner, safer, more sustainable Washington. If you have any questions, please contact Heather at heather@zerowastewashington.org.

Update on the “bring your own container” effort

By Elisabeth Archer

As you may have heard, it is currently *illegal* to bring your own container in Washington. In close collaboration with our partners, we are working to get that changed. Washington’s Department of Health is currently updating our State Food Code to include new “bring your own” provisions. The timeline has been delayed.

The process started in 2019

In 2019, we engaged with the Department of Health and their Food Safety Advisory Council requesting that new language be added as the Washington Food Safety Code is being updated. In the draft language that went out for informal public comment last July, new provisions have been added that will allow consumers to bring their own containers to grocery stores, restaurants, and more. We expected that there would be another round of public comment in February 2020, but the process has recently been changed.



Current activities

On March 11, 2020, we anticipate that the Washington State Board of Health will be hearing the revised food rules that include new provisions for consumers to refill their own containers.

Then, instead of a public comment period, there will be one public hearing about the food rule modifications at the Board of Health meeting in either in June or August. The current anticipated effective date of revised WAC 246-215 is October 2020, though this is likely to be pushed out several months so that food establishments have the time to train their staff.

The current coronavirus emergency might further delay the schedule.

We will keep you posted

When there is a confirmed date for the public hearing for the code revision with the *bring your own container* provisions, we will let you know. The comments sent in last July made a big difference!

For more info about the code and the revision process:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Food/FoodWorkerandIndustry/FoodSafetyRules/FoodCodeRuleRevision>

Thank you all for your help in moving this issue forward. If you have any questions, please contact Elisabeth at elisabeth@zerowastewashington.org or Heather at heather@zerowastewashington.org

A growing zero waste movement across WA

By Mariel Fernandez Thuraisingham

There is an impressive and growing array of zero waste organizations in Washington State. And numerous additional community groups have zero waste components to their work and partner on various efforts.

We have interviewed key leaders at each group to learn about their goals and activities. Below is a quick snapshot of each organization. More information and contact information about these organizations can be found

at: <https://zerowastewashington.org/local-zero-waste-organizations/>

- **Bainbridge Island Zero Waste**, founded in 2010 as part of nonprofit Sustainable Bainbridge, is committed to raising awareness of zero waste culture and opportunity on the island. As an all-volunteer organization hosting regular educational events and running waste management programs, they are present and active at public gatherings, including managing discard stations at special events and tabling at farmers' markets. Their Trashion Show, usually taking place around Earth Day, has become a popular event to showcase the intersection of creativity and zero waste.
- **Zero Waste Bellingham** began as an outgrowth of Western Washington University's student-led sustainability movement. In addition to running the Facebook, Zero Waste Bellingham leadership are expanding their partnerships with other organizations and building relationships with local food service businesses to promote use of reusable and low impact materials and packaging.
- **Maple Valley Zero Waste** became active in 2017 with a group of volunteers mobilizing out of local Buy Nothing and homeowner association groups to put time, energy and resources into building the zero waste movement in Maple Valley and nearby municipalities. Their activities include managing an active facebook page for sharing and learning about zero waste opportunities, hosting educational booths at seasonal events, conversations with the city council, donation and swap programs, promoting repair cafes, profiling best practices of local businesses, and advocating for minimizing the use of wasteful and single-use materials at special events.
- **Methow Recycles** began in 2001 as a program to provide recycling services in the county and has become a highly-regarded organization and service provider in the county, supporting diversified and co-mingled recycling services as well as an expanded mission for promoting conversations and opportunities around sustainability. Since 2011, Methow Recycles has expanded to include educational and practical programming around the other two R's (ReDuce, ReUse) and new activities, including repair cafes, take it or leave it programs, a tool library, partnerships with schools and farmers markets, master trainings, and engagement with local officials.
- **Green Okanogan** began in 2008 to promote recycling in North Okanogan, and has since become an established non-profit supporting nearly 7,000 county customers with recycling services and dedicated volunteer corps. In addition to supporting household recycling, Green Okanogan works with schools. They also run a thrift shop, partner with local food recovery programs, is working to improve management of waste from forest fire damage and is looking to expand into composting.



Trashion Show: Nicoletta Yoshinaga modeling an ensemble constructed from old papers.

- **Orcas Island Recycling Services and Exchange** began as Orcas Island Exchange in 1981 with a site that served island residents as a re-use store and site for exchange, and in 2013 it entered into the waste management arena after winning a contract to manage the island's recycling transfer station with a dedicated staff and volunteer support. They also engage with the local high school on environmental education, support crafting activities sourcing secondhand materials, and educate islanders on recycling practices. They seek to expand their processing capacity (e.g. baling, glass crushing for on-island use) and develop composting capacity and create repair events and tool education.
- **Poulsbo Rotary Trash Talk Task Force** began in fall 2018 out of the Poulsbo Rotary Club and remains a Rotary committee dedicated to promoting education and opportunities for sustainable living in the Poulsbo area. The group runs styrofoam round ups and other waste collection activities, recycling education including a youth leadership program, and advocating for minimizing the use of wasteful materials at special events.
- **Zero Waste Redmond** is a grassroots organization that began in summer 2019 by bringing together zero waste enthusiasts to meet regularly and mobilize around reducing the amount of waste going to landfill and supporting greater composting opportunities, particularly in multi-family housing and public spaces. The active Facebook page provides a forum for residents to share information about zero waste living. The all-volunteer organization is seeking to promote zero waste conversations and culture and is looking particularly at influencing Redmond's planned urban development initiatives.
- **Seattle Zero Waste** provides a forum for Seattle-area residents to build relationships, collaborate and share ideas for zero waste living in the area. Seattle Zero Waste boasts thousands of members to its Facebook page which is a lively forum for zero waste enthusiasts, new and old, to discuss challenges and opportunities for sustainable living, promote relevant programs, profile best practices, share educational resources, and provide information about zero waste culture in and around Seattle. The all-volunteer group has been active since summer 2017 when the co-founders organized to begin hosting monthly social events and meetups around zero waste themes.
- **Snohomish County Zero Waste.** More details to come.
- **Spokane Zero Waste.** More details to come.
- **Zero Waste Vashon** is dedicated to building the zero waste movement by supporting zero waste lifestyles and improving waste management systems on Vashon and Maury Islands. Zero Waste Vashon hosts educational events and runs special collection programs to raise awareness of technological and cultural innovations for sustainable living and reducing the amount of waste going to landfill. They are working with King County towards completing a feasibility study for an island-based compost facility.
- **Upcycle White Salmon** was initiated out of the Columbia Gorge Women's Action Network Plastic in early 2019, to advocate for policies to reduce plastic waste. Their successful mobilization and campaign led to the passage of a plastic bag ordinance. They are now working on advocacy around bring-your-own-vessel policies, speaker events, film screenings, sew-a-thons and selling reusable bags (made from old sails), and tabling at farmers markets.



Zero Waste Washington hopes to support these groups and to help nurture other efforts as the zero waste movement builds in the state. If you know of other efforts, please let us know so we can add them to the list.

Fix-It Fairs going strong. Soon, coming to Seattle

By Xenia Dolovova and Kami Bruner

We are excited to let you know that in addition to a strong presence in Tacoma, Fix-it Fairs are now expanding to Kitsap County and Seattle. More than 60 happy people attended the first Kitsap-based fair in Port Orchard in January and were able to repair their lamps, couch cushions, even a vintage weed wacker. These add to the growing list of fix-it and repair events occurring all across Washington. The next Fix-It Fair is on March 28 at Neighborhood House High Point Center in West Seattle.



First Fix-It Fair in Kitsap County was a big success

In partnership with Kitsap County, the first Fix-It Fair was held on January 25th at the Givens Community Center in Port Orchard. Here is a brief recap:

- Visitors started lining up nearly an hour before the event started.
- We had 63 visitors, 14 tinkerers, 7 day-of volunteers, and a total of 77 items in need of repair.
- Lamps were the most popular item. Our fixers examined 21 of them!
- Our fixers repaired 55 of the 77 items – a 71% success rate.
- And the total weight of fixed items **not headed to the landfill**? 470 pounds!

Here are some photos and some comments from our visitors:

"My expensive hair dryer has a second life and escaped the landfill. Thanks to all involved, especially the fixers!"

"They fixed my sewing machine (happy! happy!). Everyone was so friendly, from the fixers and helpers to the customers waiting in chairs for their name to be called. One of the Kitsap County helpers saw me struggling to carry my heavy machine to the building and raced outside to carry it for me. After it was fixed, a customer carried it all the way back to the car for me. The atmosphere of a friendly community where strangers help strangers was wonderful!"

"I was one of the Fixers. It was a great, fun event. Kudos to the planners and the folks who brought items to be repaired. Without both of you, we wouldn't have had anything important to do that day."



Come to an upcoming Fix-It Fair

- **Saturday, March 14**, Tacoma, Greater Tacoma Convention Center. RSVP [here](#) and let us know what you're bringing at FixitFairs@gmail.com
- **Saturday March 28**, Seattle, Neighborhood House at High Point. RSVP [here](#) and let us know what you're bringing at FixitFairSeattle@gmail.com. As a note, we are coordinating with existing repair events so that there will be events throughout the year all over the city!
- **Sunday April 19**, Bainbridge Island Senior Community RSVP and list your items [here](#)
- **Saturday April 25**, Kingston, Village Green Community Center, RSVP and list your items [here](#)

Find out dates of future Fix-it Fairs:

For Tacoma news, follow our Tacoma FB [page](#), or sign up [here](#).

For Seattle news, follow our Seattle FB [page](#), or sign up [here](#).

For Kitsap news, follow the web [page](#), or sign up [here](#)



Xenia and Kami are supporting Fix-It Fairs in Tacoma, Seattle, and Kitsap County, as well as other zero waste projects in the region. Please contact Xenia at xenia@zerowastewashington.org or Kami at Kami@zerowastewashington.org with any questions and if you are interested in being a fixer or volunteer at Fix-It Fairs.

Businesses signing up to be water refill locations

By Marisol Diaz



Zero Waste Washington and partners launched the *TAP! – Refill your water bottle project* in Seattle and in Snohomish County last October. Businesses have been signing up to be listed as a place where people can bring their own reusable water bottles to get a free refill. The goal is to make it easy for people to refill their water bottles and reduce our consumption of plastic water bottles.

Progress so far

In **Seattle**, the refill project is funded by Seattle Public Utilities through their WasteFree grant program. We have been onboarding businesses throughout the city. There are now over 100 refill locations in Seattle where people can refill their water bottle for free!

In **Snohomish County**, in partnership with Council member Nate Nehring, the Snohomish Health District, and WSU Extension-Snohomish, the refill project kicked off with a beach cleanup at Picnic Point on October 27. Plenty of discarded bottles were indeed found at the cleanup. Since then, WSU volunteers and others are working to sign up businesses.



Kickoff of SnoCo Tap Refill Project and beach cleanup with Beach Watchers of WSU-Snohomish County, October 27, 2019

What you can do

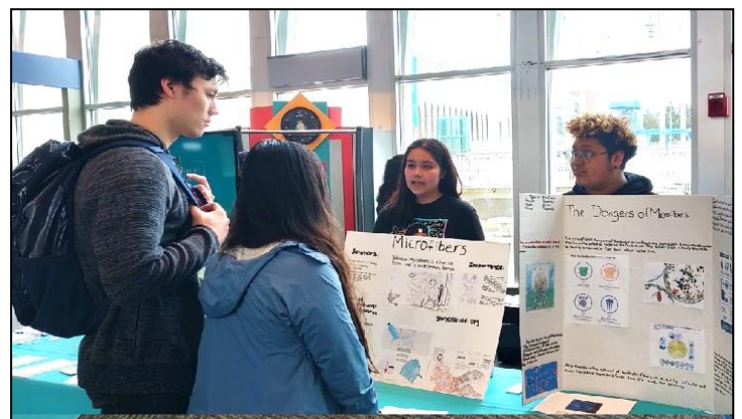
- **Become a user!** Download the app and locate the nearest refill station to you and begin refilling your water bottle.
- **Help sign up businesses.** If you would like to help recruit businesses to be refill locations, please contact Marisol.
- **Are you a business that could be a refill location?** We'd love to add you to our list. Please contact Marisol

For more information about the Tap Refill project, please contact Marisol at marisol@zerowastewashington.org.

Duwamish Valley youth educating about plastic at the Science Center

By Marisol Diaz

A new group of Duwamish Valley Youth Corps students started work in January. Zero Waste Washington is supporting the Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition in a special cohort of youth focusing on plastic pollution. Last Saturday, February 29, the youth served as educators at the Climate Change Curiosity Expo at the Pacific Science Center, telling families about plastic microfibers.



The youth did an amazing job educating the large number of families who attended the event. Curiosity Expo (CX) is a science-filled weekend for the whole community, with hands-on activities led by local experts built around a single, inspiring theme. This year's theme was Climate Change.

The youth raised awareness about the impacts of plastic microfibers. They also educated participants on how to reduce consumption and waste less. As a bonus, the youth gave out free reusable bags.



First major outreach event

As their first major event, the youth did a fantastic job stepping out of their comfort zone learning to speak to people and engage with them. As one youth member recalled, "At first I didn't want to do it, but then the more I did it the less nervous I felt."



The youth also had an opportunity to explore the expo and learn more about climate change and watch others engage with multiple audiences. A few of them even participated in activities at nearby booths to understand the multiple ways they can engage and educate the public. After the event, a few youth members spoke about incorporating more outreach ideas that would include engaging with small children.

The youth will continue educating their community on ways to reduce their waste production as well as the dangers of plastic pollution.

Thank you to the King County Waterworks grant program for supporting this work. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Marisol at marisol@zerowastewashington.org

Your support is welcome!

Zero Waste Washington cannot do this work without you. Thank you for your generous support. Together we are paving the way for a zero waste future in Washington.

And thank you for all that you do in your own lives and in the community to help create a zero waste future. Actions each of us takes every day help reduce the amount of waste going into the trash!

Send us your success stories! We'd love to hear them and maybe even include them in a future newsletter.

Donate [here](#)

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