

SEPA¹ Environmental Checklist

Purpose of checklist

Governmental agencies use this checklist to help determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant. This information is also helpful to determine if available avoidance, minimization, or compensatory mitigation measures will address the probable significant impacts or if an environmental impact statement will be prepared to further analyze the proposal.

Instructions for applicants

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Please answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. You may need to consult with an agency specialist or private consultant for some questions. **You may use “not applicable” or “does not apply” only when you can explain why it does not apply and not when the answer is unknown.** You may also attach or incorporate by reference additional studies reports. Complete and accurate answers to these questions often avoid delays with the SEPA process as well as later in the decision-making process.

The checklist questions apply to **all parts of your proposal**, even if you plan to do them over a period of time or on different parcels of land. Attach any additional information that will help describe your proposal or its environmental effects. The agency to which you submit this checklist may ask you to explain your answers or provide additional information reasonably related to determining if there may be significant adverse impact.

Instructions for lead agencies

Please adjust the format of this template as needed. Additional information may be necessary to evaluate the existing environment, all interrelated aspects of the proposal and an analysis of adverse impacts. The checklist is considered the first but not necessarily the only source of information needed to make an adequate threshold determination. Once a threshold determination is made, the lead agency is responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the checklist and other supporting documents.

Use of checklist for nonproject proposals

For nonproject proposals (such as ordinances, regulations, plans and programs), complete the applicable parts of sections A and B, plus the Supplemental Sheet for Nonproject Actions (Part D). Please completely answer all questions that apply and note that the words "project," "applicant," and "property or site" should be read as "proposal," "proponent," and "affected geographic area," respectively. The lead agency may exclude (for non-projects) questions in “Part B: Environmental Elements” that do not contribute meaningfully to the analysis of the proposal.

¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/Checklist-guidance>

A. Background

[Find help answering background questions](#)²

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:

The State Solid Waste Management Plan

2. Name of applicant:

WA State Department of Ecology, Solid Waste Management Program

3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:

300 Desmond Drive, Lacey WA 98503

Solid Waste Management Program, WA State Department of Ecology

Julie Robertson, (360) 763-2728, Julie.robertson@ecy.wa.gov

4. Date checklist prepared:

September 29, 2026

5. Agency requesting checklist:

WA State Department of Ecology

6. Proposed timing of schedule (including phasing, if applicable):

The WA State Department of Ecology will offer a public comment period for the draft State Solid Waste Management Plan update from October 15 to November 30, 2026. Ecology plans to publish the final plan in 2027.

7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.

State law requires the State Solid Waste Management Plan be reviewed every two years and revised as needed ([RCW 70A.205.210](#)).

8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.

A SEPA checklist was prepared, and a Determination of Nonsignificance was issued by the Washington State Department of Ecology for four previous State Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan updates: October 2004; November 2009; June 2015; and August 2021.

9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.

None. Local governments have local solid waste management plans, but they are not dependent on the State Solid Waste Management Plan for content or approval.

10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.

² <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-A-Background>

N/A

11. Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)

Waste generation in Washington continues to grow. Washington aims to prevent and reduce waste, not just manage waste at the end-of-life. This requires partnerships between The Department of Ecology, Tribal Nations, local governments, businesses, non-government organizations, the public, and other interested parties to create new opportunities and strategies to eliminate waste.

The State Solid Waste Management Plan is required by [RCW 70A.205.210](#). This statute directs the Department of Ecology to establish and review the plan every two years and revise it as necessary. The plan follows the waste management hierarchy that places waste reduction as the highest priority, followed by recycling, and then safe disposal. The plan outlines goals to realize this hierarchy.

The 2026 State Plan will differ from the [2021 State Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan](#) by splitting into two separate plans. The State Solid Waste Management Plan will focus exclusively on solid waste, rather than combining solid and hazardous waste. The plan will include goals, objectives, and strategies to help reduce waste, recycle, and safely dispose of materials. The ten overarching subjects with a goal outlined in the plan include facilities, financing, litter, moderate risk waste, organics, planning, problematic materials, producer responsibility, recycling, and reducing waste and impacts.

In addition to meeting statutory update requirements, we have other key objectives with the 2026 update. We are updating content to address changes since the last plan was published in 2021. This includes adding work from new laws. We have structured the plan to provide objectives, strategies, and guidance for our partners to advance the plan goals.

A summary of content for each section follows:

- 1: The **Framework** section explains the plan's purpose, approach, process, and structure.
- 2: The **Solid Waste in Washington** section describes solid waste generation, solid waste recovery, and system financing.
- 3: The **How We Do Our Work** section outlines the principles of how we approach the work in the plan.
- 4: The **Goals, Objectives, and Strategies** section shows the activities Ecology, along with our partners, plan to use to reduce waste, recycle, and safely dispose of waste.

Key Content Changes:

Key content changes in the State Solid Waste Management Plan address new actions since 2021. Additionally, the scope of the State Solid Waste Management Plan now exclusively

covers solid waste, improving clarity and alignment with current statutory responsibilities. The State Hazardous Waste Management Plan will be published separately.

Summary of the Plan Update Process

We started the State Solid Waste Management Plan update process with an assessment of changes since the 2021 plan was published. We used that information to create a draft of the goals, objectives, and strategies. We sent out a message to the existing GovDelivery list notifying recipients of our intention to split the State Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan into two separate plans. We offered a survey to interested parties to solicit public input on the State Solid Waste Management Plan. We are providing an opportunity to comment on the draft State Solid Waste Management Plan, and comments will be accepted from October 15, 2026, to November 30, 2026 via e-comments and other formats. Information on the State Solid Waste Management Plan was presented at the state Solid Waste Information Meeting in September 2026. Information about the plan update will be provided on the State Solid Waste Management Plan website. A focus sheet detailing the update process is available online in English and Spanish. The comments we receive during this process will be used to create the final State Solid Waste Management Plan update, which we aim to publish in early 2027.

Links:

- [Solid Waste Management Plan Website](#)
- [Link to Comment on this proposal](#)
- [Sign up for the state solid waste management plan email list](#)

12. Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.

The State Solid Waste Management Plan applies to the entire state of Washington, and provides guidance (not requirements) for:

- Ecology and other appropriate state agencies.
- Tribal Nations.
- Local governments, as they update and implement their local solid waste plans.
- Businesses, manufacturers, and industry (e.g. waste and recycling industry and manufacturers).
- Non-government organizations.
- The public.
- Other interested parties.

B. Environmental Elements

1. Earth

[Find help answering earth questions](#)³

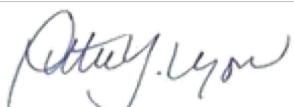
a. General description of the site:

This section is not applicable for this non-project action and has been removed.

C. Signature

[Find help about who should sign](#)⁴

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

X 

Type name of signee: Peter Lyon

Position and agency/organization: Solid Waste Management Program Manager, the Washington State Department of Ecology

Date submitted: October 15, 2026

D. Supplemental sheet for nonproject actions

[Find help for the nonproject actions worksheet](#)⁵

Do not use this section for project actions.

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment.

When answering these questions, be aware of the extent the proposal, or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal, would affect the item at a greater intensity or at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?

³ <https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/environmental-review/sepa-guidance/sepa-checklist-guidance/sepa-checklist-section-b-environmental-elements/environmental-elements-earth>

⁴ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-C-Signature>

⁵ <https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/environmental-review/sepa-guidance/sepa-checklist-guidance/sepa-checklist-section-d-non-project-actions>

The State Solid Waste Management Plan will not increase discharges to water; emissions to air; production, storage or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise. The plan is a statewide strategy for reducing waste, effectively recycling, and properly managing and disposing of waste that remains. Successful implementation of the State Solid Waste Management Plan is intended to decrease harmful impacts to the environment and Washington communities, including from discharges to water, emissions to air, and production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances. The plan may indirectly encourage some recycling or composting infrastructure, for example, that would have local impacts. Any such projects would undergo a SEPA specific to them and be subject to any other applicable state and local requirements.

- **Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:**

The 2026-2027 State Plan contains goals aimed at reducing and properly managing waste, including:

- Reducing waste, increasing reuse and recycling of materials, and improving recycling and composting operations.
- Addressing litter.
- Making sure waste handling facilities are meeting operational requirements.
- Promoting the development and use of less wasteful products.
- Using data to measure progress on these efforts and better inform our work.
- Communicating with interested parties to advance the plan work.

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?

The State Solid Waste Management Plan will not increase discharges to water; emissions to air; production, storage or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise. Implementing the State Solid Waste Management Plan is expected to benefit plants, animals, fish, and marine life by reducing waste generation, improving material recovery, and supporting safe waste disposal. Many of the plan's strategies (such as increased organics diversion and improved recycling systems) help conserve natural resources and decrease harmful contaminants that can enter habitats, waterways, and the food chain. These efforts support healthy ecosystems and lessen environmental stressors on sensitive species across terrestrial, freshwater, and marine environments.

- **Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are:**

The State Solid Waste Management Plan includes strategies to prevent environmental contamination, reduce toxic exposures, and protect water resources and vulnerable habitats. Goals include efforts to prevent and pick up litter and address problematic materials like plastics. These efforts aim to limit marine debris, support cleaner recycling streams, and improve management of materials that pose ecological risks. The plan also emphasizes staying informed about evolving end markets, emerging technologies, and life-cycle impacts to ensure waste management strategies continue to safeguard ecological health.

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

The State Solid Waste Management Plan will not deplete energy or natural resources. Implementing the State Solid Waste Management Plan is expected to reduce the use of energy and natural resources by improving waste prevention, recycling, and organics management systems. Certain strategies in the plan are designed to minimize the extraction of raw materials, lower energy use associated with manufacturing and disposal, and reduce water consumption throughout the materials lifecycle. By increasing recovery of materials and supporting more efficient management practices, the plan helps conserve finite resources and lessen the environmental footprint of Washington's waste system.

- **Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:**

The State Solid Waste Management Plan includes strategies that encourage and support businesses, local governments, and communities in adopting practices that reduce energy and natural resource use. Measures include expanding the beneficial use of compost and other recycled organic products and supporting the conversion of organic waste into soil amendments, fuels, energy, and other applications. These strategies help retain nutrients, improve soil health, reduce reliance on synthetic inputs, and capture energy value from organic materials.

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection, such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?

Implementing the State Solid Waste Management Plan is expected to reduce risks to environmentally sensitive areas, including wetlands, floodplains, parks, prime farmlands, and habitats for threatened or endangered species. By reducing contamination and improving material recovery, the plan supports healthier water systems and ecosystems that are especially vulnerable to pollution. Strategies that limit waste and improve management of difficult materials will help prevent impacts on rivers, marine environments, and other protected areas.

- **Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:**

The State Solid Waste Management Plan includes actions designed to prevent contamination of sensitive areas and reduce environmental stressors on vulnerable species and ecosystems. Key measures include promoting the beneficial use of compost and other recycled organic products and educating farmers, landscapers, and residents about the ecological benefits of organic soil amendments. The plan also advances litter prevention strategies. Together, these measures help keep sensitive areas cleaner, reduce pollutant pathways, and safeguard natural resources across Washington.

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

The State Solid Waste Management Plan is expected to have no effect on shoreline use. It does encourage appropriate solid waste infrastructure, such as composting and recycling facilities, that are consistent and compatible with existing zoning and local plans.

- **Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:**

N/A

- **How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?**

Implementing the State Solid Waste Management Plan is not expected to significantly increase demand on transportation or public services and utilities. The plan primarily supports more efficient and equitable solid waste and recycling services through partnerships with collection companies regulated by the WA State Utilities and Transportation Commission. While expanded organics diversion and improved household hazardous waste management may shift some service needs, these changes are intended to streamline operations, reduce environmental impacts, and strengthen existing systems rather than create new burdens. No substantial increases in transportation or utility demands are anticipated beyond normal system adjustments.

- **Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:**

The State Solid Waste Management Plan includes strategies that reduce strain on public systems by improving waste handling, expanding safe management options, and increasing diversion of materials that are costly or challenging to manage. The plan advances statewide organic waste goals by supporting edible food rescue, increasing organic waste collection and processing, and promoting the conversion of organic materials into soil amendments, fuels, and energy. These strategies help reduce landfill dependence, minimize transportation needs associated with waste disposal, and support more efficient use of public services and infrastructure.

6. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

The State Solid Waste Management Plan is not in conflict with any laws or requirements. The plan update is in accordance with statutory directions ([RCW 70A.205.210](#)) that requires a state solid waste management plan and establishes a waste management hierarchy.

The EPA has solid waste planning requirements in [RCRA Subtitle D Part 256](#) from 1979 that are generally considered out of date. Instead of changing this law, EPA wrote guidance documents that have promoted sustainable materials management for state plans since 2003. These documents are:

- [Beyond RCRA: Waste and Materials Management in the Year 2020 \(2003\)](#);
- [Sustainable Materials Management: The Road Ahead \(2009\)](#);
- [RCRA's Critical Mission & The Path Forward \(2014\)](#); and
- [EPA Sustainable Materials Management Program Strategic Plan: 2017-2022 \(2015\)](#)

This State Solid Waste Management Plan is in accordance with that guidance as well as EPA and Ecology's Performance Partnership Agreement (PPA).

Local governments are encouraged, but are not required, to coordinate their local solid waste planning with the State Solid Waste Management Plan.