The State Solid Waste Management Plan (DRAFT)

Moving Washington Beyond Waste

Washington State Department of Ecology

Solid Waste Management Program

Olympia, Washington

October 2026, Publication XX-XX-XXX

Publication Information

This document is available on the Department of Ecology's website at:
https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/XXXXXXX.html

Cover photo credit

- Washington State Department of Ecology, taken July 31, 2023

Contact Information

Solid Waste Management Program

P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600
Phone: 360-407-6900
Website[1]: Washington State Department of Ecology

ADA Accessibility

The Department of Ecology is committed to providing people with disabilities access to information and services by meeting or exceeding the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Washington State Policy #188.

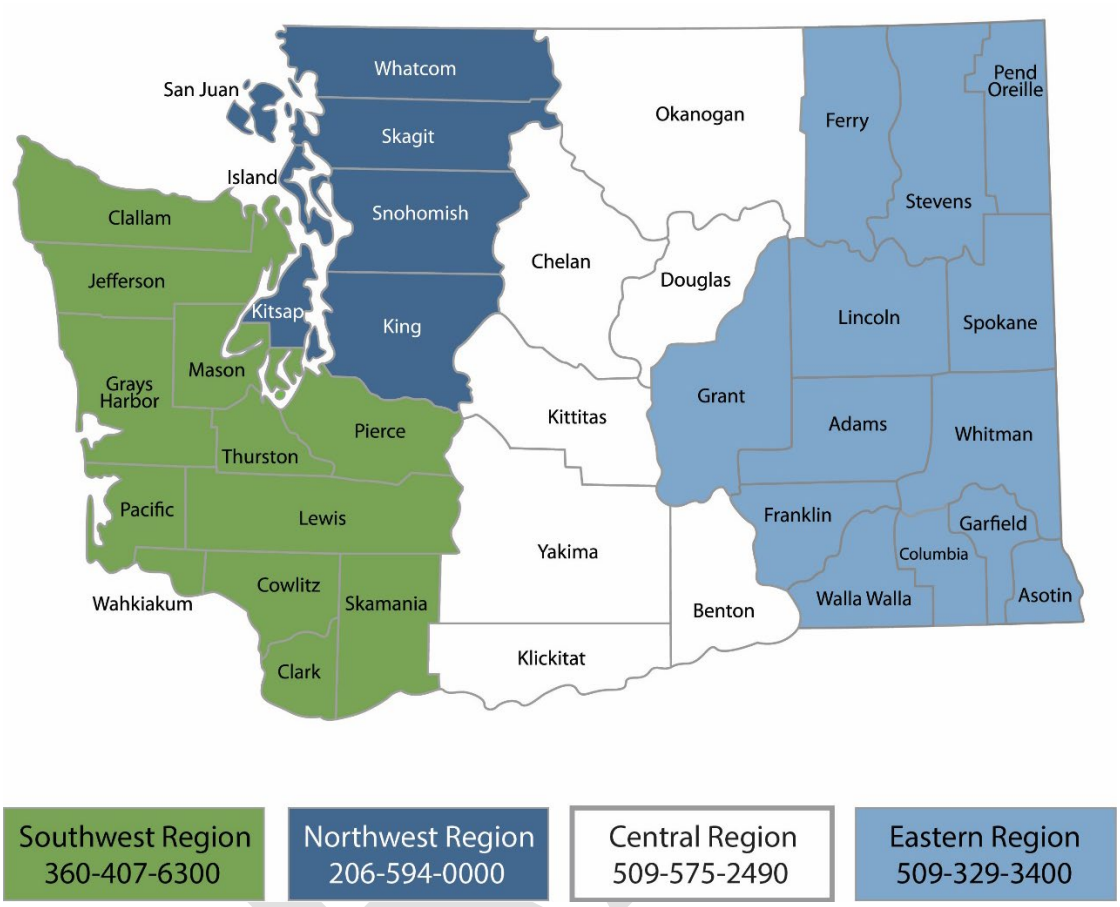
To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6900 or email at SWMpublications@ecy.wa.gov. For Washington Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341. Visit Ecology's website for more information.

DRAFT

[1] www.ecology.wa.gov/contact

Department of Ecology's Regional Offices

Map of Counties Served



Region	Counties served	Mailing Address	Phone
Southwest	Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Mason, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum	PO Box 47775 Olympia, WA 98504	360-407-6300
Northwest	Island, King, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom	PO Box 330316 Shoreline, WA 98133	206-594-0000
Central	Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, Yakima	1250 W Alder St Union Gap, WA 98903	509-575-2490
Eastern	Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman	4601 N Monroe Spokane, WA 99205	509-329-3400
Headquarters	Across Washington	PO Box 46700 Olympia, WA 98504	360-407-6000

The State Solid Waste Management Plan

Solid Waste Management Program
Washington State Department of Ecology
Olympia, WA

October 2026 | Publication XX-XX-XXX (DRAFT)

DRAFT

DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Table of Contents

List of Figures **5**

Executive Summary **6**

Section 1: Framework **7**

Purpose 7

Approach 7

Process 8

Structure 8

Goals 9

Section 2: Solid Waste in Washington **11**

Generation 11

Recovery 12

System Financing 13

Section 3: How We Do Our Work **18**

Solid waste management partners 18

Data and measurement 20

Education and outreach 22

Demographics 23

Environmental justice 24

Policy approaches 24

Section 4: Plan Goals, Objectives, and Strategies **30**

Facilities 30

Financing 31

Litter 31

Moderate risk waste 32

Organics 33

Planning 35

Problematic materials 36

Producer Responsibility 38

Recycling 39

Reducing waste and impacts 40

Glossary **42**

DRAFT

List of Figures

Figure 1. Materials and products life cycle 7
Figure 2. Waste Management Hierarchy as defined in RCW 70A.205.005 9
Figure 3. Solid waste generated and recovered, and population in Washington, 2000-2024..... 12
Figure 4. Recovery Rate in Washington, 2000-2024 13
Figure 5 Breakdown of WRRLCA funding..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

DRAFT

Executive Summary

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) is required by the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 70A.205.210[2] to develop a state solid waste management plan (State Plan) for 20 years in the future. Ecology reviews it biennially and revises it as necessary. The 2026 State Plan is different from previous plans as it exclusively covers solid waste, instead of combining solid and hazardous waste.

The State Plan guides the management of waste and materials in the state and aids local governments as they develop local solid waste management plans. The State Plan builds on the waste hierarchy adopted in chapter 70A.205 RCW, which places waste reduction as the highest priority, followed by recycling, energy recovery, and then safe disposal. The State Plan supports this hierarchy.

The State Plan promotes a sustainable materials management approach. This method looks at the full life cycle of materials from the design and manufacturing phase, through the use phase to the end-of-life phase when the material is either disposed of or recycled. This is important because the harmful environmental impacts of extraction, production, and use can be far greater than those associated with disposal when a material becomes a waste. Sustainable materials management [3] is essential to conserving our natural resources to meet both today's needs and those of future generations.

The State Plan has four main sections after the Executive Summary:

1. The **Framework** section explains the State Plan 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.

Visit Ecology's State Solid Waste Management Plan webpage[4] for more information on the update process.

[2] https://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=70A.205.210
[3] https://www.epa.gov/smm/sustainable-materials-management-basics
[4] https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/plans-policies/washington-state-waste-plans/about-the-plan

Section 1: Framework

Purpose

Washington State, through Ecology is required to develop a State Solid Waste Management Plan (State Plan) and review and update it as necessary (chapter 70A.205 RCW).[5] The State Plan guides the management of waste and materials in the state and aids local governments as they develop local solid and hazardous waste plans.

The State Plan supports the waste management hierarchy established in the solid waste statute, which identifies waste reduction as the highest priority, followed by recycling, energy recovery, and then safe disposal.

Approach

The State Plan promotes a sustainable materials management approach, which looks at the full life cycle of materials. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines sustainable materials management as, "a systematic approach to using and reusing materials more productively over their entire life cycles."[6]

This life cycle, as illustrated in Figure 1,[7] includes the design and production phase, through the use and reuse phase, to the end-of-life phase when the material is either disposed or recycled. Recycling and the use of recovered materials leads back into the design and production phase. Materials that are extracted from virgin resources are new inputs into the cycle and those that are disposed at end-of-life exit the cycle.

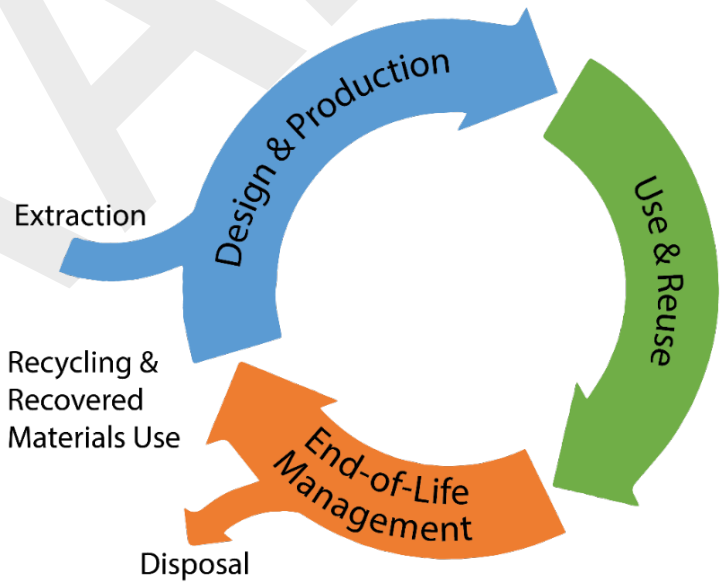


Figure 1. Materials and products life cycle

Understanding the full life cycle of materials is crucial because the harmful environmental and health impacts of extraction, production, and use typically exceed those associated with disposal when the material becomes a waste. By managing materials through all phases of their life cycle, we are best able to reduce harmful environmental, health, and climate effects.

Resources are declining worldwide while demand continues to grow. As more people consume resources in the form of products and materials, it causes more pollution, including greenhouse

[5] https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.205
[6] https://www.epa.gov/smm/sustainable-materials-management-basics
[7] Graphic adapted from Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

gases and other toxic releases. This also puts increased pressure on the communities that extract or manufacture these resources.

Using resources faster than the planet can renew them limits the ability of all people to meet their basic needs now and in the future. The linear use of resources where we extract materials, use them once, and then throw them away is not sustainable. Not only will we run out of key materials, but the throw-away society continues to pollute our environment with waste and toxics. We need to use fewer resources, and use them in a circular model, as illustrated by the sustainable materials management cycle in Figure 1.

The sustainable materials management framework continues to serve as a useful approach for advancing Washington state goals for sustainable energy and a clean environment, healthy and safe communities, and a prosperous economy.[8]

Fulfilling the State Plan's goals includes creating equitable approaches to materials management. This will take time, sustained effort, resources, and possibly additional statutory change. These investments are critical to address environmental justice associated with waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and final disposal of waste materials. As we work on advancing the State Plan, we will include opportunities to address and further our commitment to environmental justice and equity.

Process

In this update, the State Plan focuses on solid waste and does not include state hazardous waste planning requirements (RCW 70A.300.310), which will be published separately in late 2026 or early 2027. Moderate risk waste (MRW; hazardous waste from households and small amounts from businesses), which falls under jurisdiction of solid waste management, is still included in the State Solid Waste Management Plan, with related local coordination and public education aspects of moderate risk waste addressed in the State Hazardous Waste Management Plan.

To create this update, Ecology wrote and circulated a draft for public comment.[9]

Structure

The State Plan addresses Ecology's work on solid waste and materials management, including facilities, financing, litter, moderate risk waste, organics, planning, problematic materials, product stewardship, recycling, and waste reduction.

The State Plan update contains 10 goals that describe the outcomes we intend to achieve. Section 4 lists the goals, objectives, and strategies. The strategies describe actions to help meet the objectives and goals, though implementation will depend on available resources. The goals and objectives include a flexible list of options that support progress towards following the waste management hierarchy.

[8] Results Washington: https://results.wa.gov

[9] https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Plans-policies/Washington-state-waste-plan/About-the-plan

The goals, objectives, and strategies are broadly written for application to many audiences. They come from public and partner input as well as staff expertise. They are intended to provide guidance to other governments, organizations, and the private sector; they may be carried out by others as well as Ecology. They represent a wide range of steps to move us into a future of less waste, while working to keep current systems functioning well.

Achieving the goals in the State Plan will help us follow the waste management hierarchy outlined in statute, which identifies waste reduction as the highest priority, followed by recycling, energy recovery, and then safe disposal.

Goals: This plan includes 10 goals. The goals are specific end results we want to achieve in the future. They are broad, long-term outcomes that are meant to leave room for entities to develop actions to reach these goals.

Objectives: The plan objectives are more specific than goals. They are pathways to follow to help accomplish or work toward a goal. They show what we need to do to reach a goal.

Strategies: Strategies are the steps we take to achieve a goal. Like objectives, strategies make actions more specific for a plan so they can provide progress toward the goal.

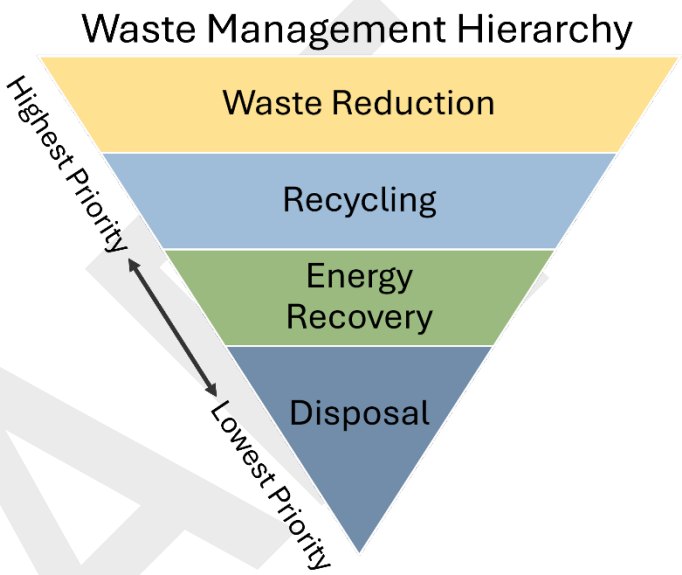


Figure 2. Waste Management Hierarchy as defined in RCW 70A.205.005

Goals

Facilities

Solid waste handling facilities comply with all regulatory requirements and promptly conduct corrective actions to remedy any noncompliance or environmental release.

Financing

Sufficient, equitable, and sustainable funding sources and grant programs are in place for Washington's solid waste and materials management system. Funding supports and advances waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and proper waste management.

Litter

Effective and equitable programs and policies prevent and pick up litter.

Moderate risk waste

MRW programs provide safe, accessible services for residents, businesses, and underserved communities to recycle or dispose of hazardous waste.

Organics

Wasted food and other organic wastes are prevented, reduced, recovered, and beneficially used. Progress on food waste reduction and organics diversion goals are made possible by sufficient infrastructure and viable end markets.

Planning

The State Solid Waste Management Plan provides a framework for local government and other partners to manage waste responsibly, implement sustainable funding structures, and work together on priority materials. Local governments use their local Plans and keep them current.

Problematic materials

Problematic and hard-to-handle materials in the waste stream are reduced, reused, recycled, and safely managed through research, collaborative stakeholder efforts, and thoughtful policy solutions.

Producer responsibility

Producer responsibility programs provide equitable, accessible collection, reuse, recycling, and safe disposal of toxic or hard-to-handle products and packaging.

Recycling

Recyclable materials are collected and managed responsibly through a clear and consistent system, maximizing resource recovery and minimizing environmental impact.

Reducing waste and impacts

Reduce climate and other environmental impacts of waste and materials throughout their lifecycle.

DRAFT

Section 2: Solid Waste in Washington

Solid waste is a broad term that applies to waste and materials from a variety of activities and sectors. Solid waste comes from households and businesses and includes garbage, recycling, organics, household hazardous waste, and construction and demolition debris. The main statute governing solid waste is chapter 70A.205 RCW Solid Waste Management—Reduction and Recycling.[10] This broad-reaching statute was originally written in 1969 and has been amended many times.

Prior to and throughout most of the 20th century, solid waste management focused on safe garbage disposal and landfill management. Now efforts to prevent waste, support reuse, and improve recycling are also top priorities. As we manage solid waste in the future, we must also address the impacts of material production and use.

Generation

Solid waste generation in Washington over the last two decades has generally been increasing; however, in the past four years there has been a decrease in waste generation. In 2024 (the most recent year we have data available), the recoverable portion of waste generation reached 16.3 million tons. From 2000 to 2024, solid waste generation grew by 56 percent, while population increased by 36 percent during that time (Figure 2). However, since 2020 waste generation has decreased by 15 percent while population has grown by 4 percent. This shows that despite a rise in the number of people in Washington, the amount of waste being created annually has reduced in recent years.

Solid waste includes all discards from homes and businesses, including recyclable materials, as well as waste from manufacturing and construction.

Recovery includes materials that were recycled, composted, anaerobically digested, land applied, and source-separated materials burned for energy recovery.

In 2024, 9.1 million tons of potentially recoverable waste generated in Washington were disposed of in landfills and mixed waste incinerators. This includes materials like paper and other recyclable materials, organics, construction and demolition debris, and other commercial and residential solid waste materials. An additional 800,000 tons of non-recoverable clean-up type waste were also disposed in landfills. This includes materials such as contaminated soils and asbestos, which are typically and best placed in the landfill. In 2024, 7.2 million tons of solid waste material were reported as collected for recovery.

Ecology conducts periodic waste characterization studies to track the composition of the municipal solid waste we are disposing. Items that make up significant portions of our waste stream include food and organic materials, cardboard and paper, construction and demolition

[10] https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.205

DRAFT

debris, and bulky plastic items. Other than bulky plastic items, these materials can potentially be recycled or otherwise recovered. Waste characterization studies are available on the Ecology solid waste and recycling data webpage.[11]

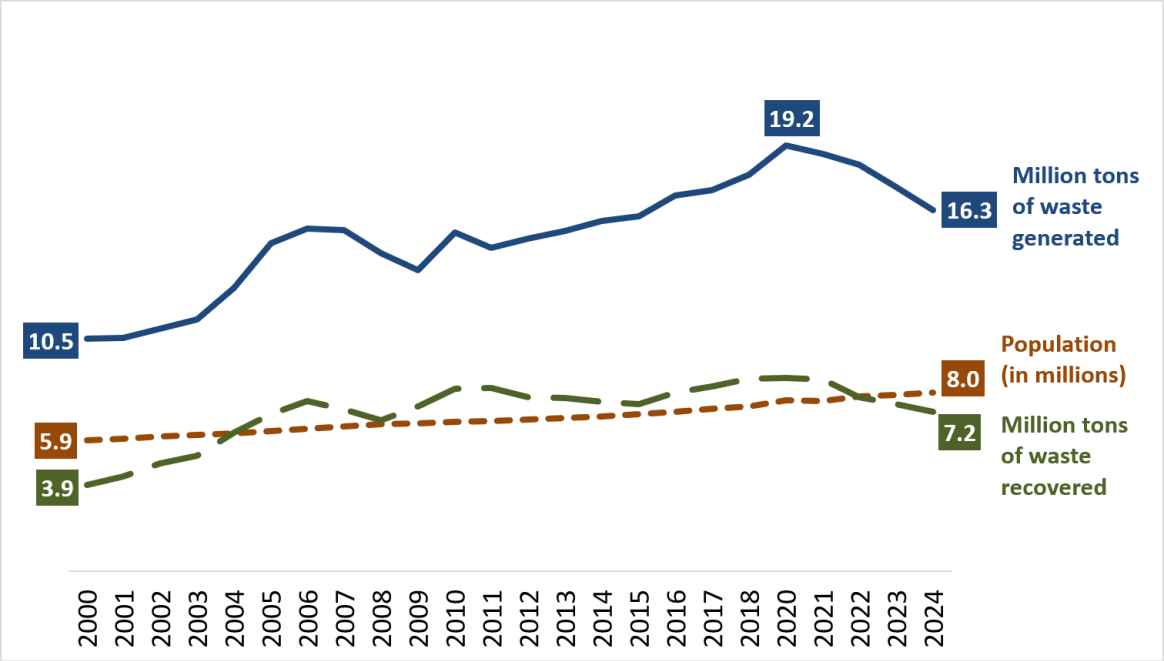


Figure 3. Solid waste generated and recovered, and population in Washington, 2000-2024

Recovery

Since 2000, the solid waste recovery rate (the percent of materials collected for recycling, composting, and other beneficial uses) has increased overall, but is no longer at its peak of 56.6 percent, as shown in Figure 3. In 2024, the most recent year with finalized data, the recovery rate was 44.2 percent, continuing the steady decline seen since 2011. Though we are generating less waste material in recent years, the amount we are disposing has increased while the amount we are recovering has decreased. Since the peak recovery rate in 2011, the tonnage of material collected for recovery has decreased by 13 percent, while the tonnage of material disposed has increased by 44 percent, leading to the overall decline in the recovery rate observed in the past several years.

Previously, Ecology published a municipal solid waste (MSW) recycling rate that focused on traditional residential recyclable materials. More materials were reported as collected for recycling, but contamination and confusion also increased as the public dealt with inconsistent accepted materials lists. Unfortunately, a focus on increasing recycling rates did not serve the higher goal of reducing waste.

[11] https://ecology.wa.gov/research-data/data-resources/solid-waste-recycling-data

Starting in 2019, Ecology shifted its solid waste tracking to emphasize waste reduction and recovery of more material types through recycling, composting, anaerobic digestion, land application, and burning source-separated materials for energy recovery. Although the recovery rate is a useful metric, Ecology focuses on waste generation as its primary measurement (see Figure 2). This is a more accurate way to assess if Washington residents and businesses are reducing waste, the state's highest waste management priority.

Since 1984, by statute, waste reduction has been the highest priority for waste management. While recent years show that we are moving in the right direction, there is still a lot of work to be done. For the most recent data, see the Waste in Washington story map.[12]

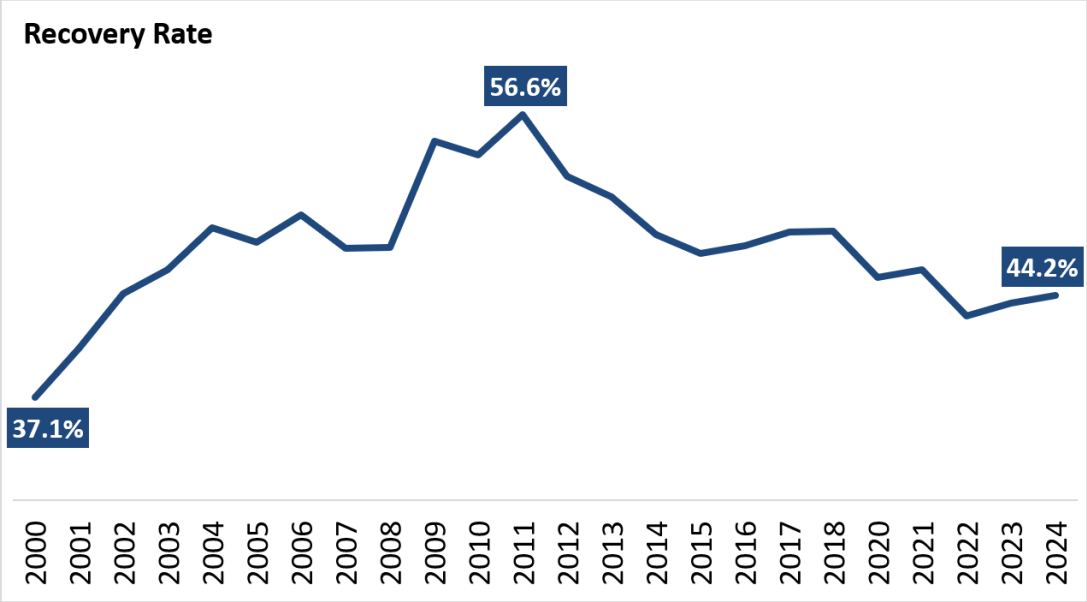


Figure 4. Recovery Rate in Washington, 2000-2024

System Financing

Much of Washington state's solid waste system financing relies on solid waste disposal fees or tipping fees, along with service charges and some grant funding. The system's financial needs include the costs of meeting regulatory requirements, long-term care of landfills, maintaining current infrastructure, building new infrastructure to keep up with growing populations, recycling, waste reduction programs, litter cleanup, and administration.

A persistent question is how to sustain funding for solid waste infrastructure and programs when the goal is to reduce waste disposal, which is the source of significant funding.

Local governments have expressed concerns about sufficient funding to meet their solid waste management responsibilities since the first state solid waste management plan was published in 1972. This plan called for a study to explore current and potential funding sources and included a recommendation to expand state grants to local governments.

[12] https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/81f7dfd33e204263b2a8cd3014b14ed4

The 1980 State Solid Waste Plan stated that "Local governments… need to have the capability to generate an adequate level of funds to support all the phases of solid waste management for which they are responsible: planning, monitoring and enforcement, operation and maintenance, capital investments and improvements, and public involvement." The 1980 plan recommended that legislation be passed to allow counties to establish solid waste disposal districts. This ability was created in 1982, as reflected in RCW 36.58.110-150[13]; however, only a few counties use this mechanism including Lewis, San Juan, and Whatcom Counties.

Previous State Plans have included recommendations for financing and recommendations for additional studies. Ecology conducted two financing studies, in 2017 and 2023.

The 2017 three-part financing study, "Funding mechanisms for Solid Waste," provides extensive information on current and potential funding mechanisms along with recommendations.

The 2023 legislatively required five-part financing study includes an update of the funding mechanisms from the 2017 study and an assessment of funding needs to meet the Washington Association of County Solid Waste Managers core service model.[14] In addition, the study modeled costs of proposed and passed solid waste-related legislation over a four-year period. While the study was to examine cost impacts of the policies to local governments, it was unable to be this specific given the diversity of funding structures in use. Instead, they modeled impacts to the solid waste system overall.

From these studies and other research, some best management practices can be identified to help meet sustainable funding goals. While additional research might help find funding solutions, some recommendations are clear. These include:

- Support producer responsibility, so that producers share in the cost of managing their products after their use (or at end of life).
- Incorporate the complete costs of solid waste collection and disposal into the prices charged for them, including tip fees.
- Do not use garbage fees to cover the costs of recycling or composting and do not suggest these services are free.
- Use taxes that have a nexus to solid waste, such as the solid waste collection tax, to help fund solid waste needs.
- Add items to accurately reflect what is littered to the litter tax statute to provide more funding for waste reduction and litter programs.

Links to these and other funding studies can be found on this webpage: Solid waste financing.[15]

Funding for Ecology's Solid Waste Program work and grant programs

[13] https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=36.58
[14] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/1707014.html & https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/1707015.html & https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/1707016.html
[15] https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/guidance-technical-assistance/solid-waste-financing

State government also needs funding to do our work and to provide funding to local governments and other partners.

Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Litter Control Account

The Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Litter Control Account (WRRLCA)[16] supports vital solid waste management work in Washington, including litter prevention and pickup, recycling, waste reduction, and conserving energy and natural resources. WRRLCA is funded from a "litter tax" that applies a 0.015 percent tax on 13 product categories commonly found in litter in 1971 when the law passed. This account provides funding for solid waste management work, including preventing and picking up litter, recycling and waste reduction efforts, and supports grants to local government and nonprofits. Ecology's WRRLCA webpage[17] provides more information.

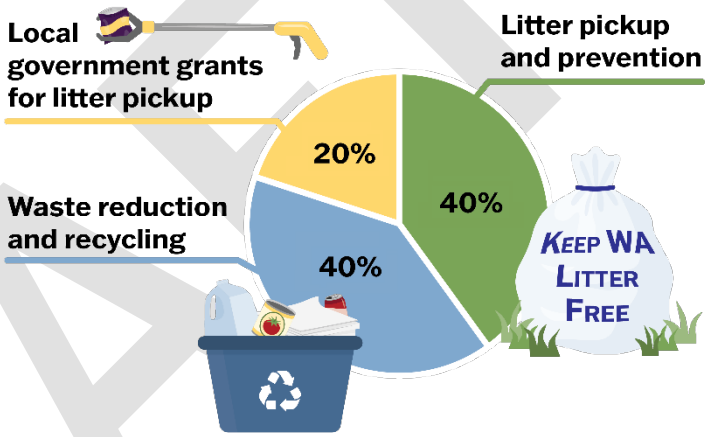


Figure 5 Breakdown of WRRLCA funding

Model Toxic Control Account

The Model Toxics Control Account (MTCA)[18] operating account is a main source of funding for Ecology's technical assistance for solid waste facilities, local solid waste management and hazardous waste planning and implementation, product restriction law implementation, and grant oversight. MTCA also funds solid waste-related grants for local governments and nonprofit organizations. The amount of funding in MTCA comes from a tax on hazardous substances. This tax is on materials such as petroleum products, pesticides, and other chemicals. On July 1, 2019, the Hazardous Substance Tax mechanism shifted from 0.7 percent wholesale price of liquid petroleum to an inflation-adjusted flat rate per 42-gallon barrel introduced into the State of Washington to stabilize MTCA funding against revenue volatility. However, under this new structure, revenue has begun to plateau, proving difficult to keep up with rising costs. There have also been significant diversions from MTCA that have deepened the decrease in available funding.

Given challenges with MTCA funding, redirecting some of the Solid Waste Collection Tax[19] to solid waste uses could be considered by the Legislature. Currently the 3.6 percent tax on solid waste disposal is used to help fund public works projects, with the majority used for stormwater and wastewater needs. In the past, an additional 1 percent of the tax was

[16] Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Litter Control Account (WRRLCA)
[17] Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Litter Control Account - Washington State Department of Ecology
[18] https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=70A.305
[19] https://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=82.18

dedicated to funding state and local solid waste needs. The tax could also be expanded to cover additional material streams by the Legislature.

Producer responsibility funded accounts

Product-specific accounts created by producer responsibility program laws fund state agency work to establish and oversee those programs. This is a small but growing source of agency funding as the Legislature creates new producer responsibility programs. Because producer responsibility programs also fund, at least in part, the collection and management of their products, they remove or lighten the burden on state and local government as well as the public.

Ecology's Solid Waste Management grant programs

Ecology provides multiple grant programs to help fund the state solid waste system.

There are two grant programs funded from the Model Toxic Control Account (MTCA):

- Local Solid Waste Financial Assistance (LSWFA), [20] is a formula-based, noncompetitive grant program for local governments. This important funding source helps local governments maintain and implement required waste management plans. LSWFA also provides funding for local enforcement of solid waste rules and regulations.
- Public Participation Grants (PPG), [21] are competitive grants for individuals and nonprofit organizations to help inform and engage the public about the investigation and clean up of contaminated sites and to support work that aligns with the state's waste management goals.

There are three grant programs funded from the litter tax account (WRRLCA):

- Waste Reduction and Recycling Education (WRRED) [22] grants are a competitive grant program for local governments and nonprofit organizations to design education programs to help the public with litter control, waste reduction, recycling, and composting. This program is budget dependent and may not be offered every biennium.
- Ramp Litter Cleanup Program (RLCP)[23] is a competitive grant program for local governments to clean up litter on state highway ramps, including interchanges and intersections.
- Community Litter Cleanup Program (CLCP)[24] is a formula-based, noncompetitive grant program for local governments designated for litter pickup, illegal dump cleanup, and to provide litter prevention education and public outreach.

There is one grant program funded by the Climate Commitment Account (CCA):

[20] https://ecology.wa.gov/programs/swfa/grants/cpg.html
[21] https://ecology.wa.gov/ppgrants
[22] https://ecology.wa.gov/WRRED
[23] https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Payments-contracts-grants/Grants-loans/Find-a-grant-or-loan/Ramp-Litter-Cleanup-Program
[24] https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Payments-contracts-grants/Grants-loans/Find-a-grant-or-loan/Community-litter-cleanup-grants

- Sustainable Food Management Program Grants support activities that reduce emissions from disposal facilities through the diversion of organic materials and food waste prevention, rescue, and recovery. Ecology is currently writing rules for this program (information on chapter 173-316 WAC). Ecology is currently writing rules for this program (information on chapter 173-316 WAC). More details about the program will be available after Ecology concludes rulemaking and guidelines are developed. Ecology anticipates they may be available in 2028.

DRAFT

Section 3: How We Do Our Work

Solid waste management partners

Washington's solid waste system involves many partners who play a role in the safe management of solid waste, including waste reduction, collection, recycling, and disposal.

Local governments

Counties and cities have primary responsibility for regulating and overseeing management of solid waste in Washington and making sure their residents have access to services. They must prepare local solid waste management plans[25] which define and describe their systems for 20 years into the future, as well as hazardous waste management plans,[26] which reflect the State's directive to rigorously manage MRW.

Counties, jurisdictional health departments, and cities share this responsibility. Local governments often work with collection companies to provide programs and infrastructure, such as transfer stations and recycling drop-boxes. In some instances, local governments may own composting operations, landfills, and collection vehicles and bins for residential and some business services.

Local health departments

Local health departments have permitting authority for solid waste handling facilities in their jurisdictions (chapter 36.58 RCW).[27] The investigation and enforcement of illegal dumps also falls under local health department jurisdiction. Ecology's Solid Waste Management program[28] assists and oversees waste reduction, recycling, organics conversion, and disposal programs. Ecology engineers, hydrogeologists, and facility specialists provide technical assistance to the health departments as well as solid waste facility owners, operators, and the public.

Ecology has direct authority over facilities that are conditionally exempt from permitting. Ecology staff also oversee cleanup at several solid waste landfills throughout the state. Ecology will be undertaking new authority related to landfill permitting. By August 2027, landfilling permits issued by a jurisdictional health department must be approved by Ecology.

Solid waste collection companies

Solid waste collection companies play a major role in collecting, transporting, and processing waste, recyclables, and organics. Some companies also operate transfer stations, landfills, and composting and recycling facilities in the state. Counties are required to use the collection companies certified by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) for residential garbage collection. Counties may choose to contract for residential curbside recycling collection, but only one county currently does so.

---

[25] https://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=70A.205.040
[26] https://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=70A.300.350
[27] https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=36.58
[28] https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Get-to-know-us/Our-Programs/Solid-Waste-Management

DRAFT

Cities may choose to use the UTC franchised service provider, contract for services, or provide their own services. Only a few cities operate their own garbage and recycling trucks, so most services in the state are provided by private collection companies. The collection companies work with local governments to establish and negotiate the recycling and disposal programs provided to residents. Local governments also contract with these companies to operate locally owned transfer stations or drop-off sites.

Non-governmental organizations

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operate recycling drop-off facilities, particularly in rural areas, or do litter clean-ups. Others provide education, perform research, and advocate for policy. NGOs may apply for state grants or other assistance programs to advance innovative waste reduction, reuse, and recycling programs. Public involvement in waste management issues is often accomplished through engagement with NGOs.

Manufacturers, retailers, and trade associations

As laws have passed that regulate products, new partners have joined Washington's waste and materials management landscape – the manufacturers, retailers, and trade associations for packaging and products. In some cases, Ecology registers, regulates, invoices, and gets reports from manufacturers with legal requirements they must follow. In other cases, we notify retailers, restaurants, lodging establishments, and others about product bans or new collection/waste diversion requirements. In cases where there are producer responsibility laws, manufacturers join producer responsibility organizations to implement the takeback and other requirements in the laws. Producer responsibility organizations collaborate with service providers and local governments, with oversight by Ecology.

State government

Washington State, through Ecology, ensures local governments, private service providers, other businesses, and the public are minimizing and safely managing waste. This includes developing regulations for safe waste handling that guide local governments and service providers. It also includes providing grants to local governments and non-governmental organizations for waste-related programs. The state creates the local government waste planning guidelines and approves local plans.

Many other state agencies also support the waste management system, including the Departments of Commerce, Agriculture, Transportation, Enterprise Services, Natural Resources, Corrections, and the UTC. The UTC regulates rates and services of solid waste collection companies as part of their regulation of transportation industries (chapter 81.77 RCW).[29] They provide tariffs certifying collection rights to only one company in each given area. This system provides affordable curbside waste collection to all residents in the state, as well as curbside recycling collection to the more populated counties.

Tribes

[29] http://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=81.77

Ecology works with Tribes in a government-to-government relationship to protect and manage natural resources and to cooperate across jurisdictions. These Tribes are distinct sovereign governments. Tribal Nations possess federally reserved, inherent rights and treaty-reserved rights, to their ceded traditional lands, culturally significant sites, and usual and accustomed areas within the state's borders. Tribes are essential environmental partners, co-managers, and decision-makers in Washington state's environmental, cultural, and resource-management efforts. Tribal Governments and any waste management sites within Tribal lands are regulated under federal laws.

Other states and the federal government

The federal government, typically the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), provides direction, asks for input, and offers grants to the states and others. Ecology interacts regularly with other states in a few different ways. We share successes and lessons learned and strive to harmonize policies and programs.

The public

The public is a crucial part of Washington's solid waste system. They use the services provided by local governments and private companies, such as curbside collection, drop-off sites, transfer stations, and special collection events. Each local government has a Solid Waste Advisory Committee which should include members of the public. Some local governments offer training for Master Recyclers or Composters, teaching members of the public in exchange for volunteer outreach about recycling and composting. And finally, as noted in statute RCW 70A.205.005:[30]

> *"It should be the goal of every person and business to minimize their production of wastes and to separate recyclable or hazardous materials from mixed waste."*

These partners help advance all aspects of solid waste management in Washington. The State Plan aims to provide guiding information to all. Ecology continues to work closely and collaborate with our partners to advance the goals of the State Plan.

Data and measurement

All levels of government use data to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and initiatives. Data analysis helps determine future directions, identify gaps, build budgets, and run programs properly. Data informs the efficiency, effectiveness, and environmental justice considerations of materials and waste management.

We incorporate data and measurements throughout this plan. We intend to:

- Measure progress on key aspects for achieving the plan goals and make recommendations that support that path.
- Support plan goals by identifying data gaps and providing supporting recommendations that would help to fill those gaps.

[30] https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.205.005

- Track data on the environmental impacts of materials, from extraction, manufacture, purchase, and discard, and use this data to inform decisions.
- Use data to inform efficiency, effectiveness, and environmental justice considerations of materials and waste management.

While Ecology and others rely on many outside datasets, some of which must be purchased, most of the data that local government, private companies, and Ecology collect in the solid waste system is required in statute or rule. For example, a regulated solid waste facility is required to annually report solid waste materials they receive to Ecology and its local health department. The data reported includes the amount of material going to recycling, composting, and disposal facilities.

Priorities for data collection are set in statute and rules. Establishing these rules requires public opportunities for all interest groups to influence the requirements, such as which facilities must report and the details of those reports.

A key part of Washington's data collection is the periodic state waste characterization study including sector analyses for construction and demolition debris, MRW, organics (including food waste), products, and packaging. We aim to do this study every five to six years, coordinating with waste characterization studies done at the local level.

We also use tools, like EPA's Waste Reduction Model (WARM),[31] and other available life cycle models to assess key impacts in the extraction, production, use, reuse, and end-of-life phases. This information is augmented by the 2025 consumption-based emissions analysis for Washington state. This publication is expected in the future.

The data Ecology's Solid Waste Management Program collects are available on the solid waste and recycling data [32] webpage and the Waste in Washington story map.[33] Both of these sources are updated as new data is available. The Waste in Washington story map provides interactive visual displays of data with infographics, maps, and dashboards.

Ecology uses data in publications, public outreach on social media channels, blogs, and websites. We share pertinent data directly with local governments, and report data to the Office of Financial Management for budget development and other decision making.

Our partners can use the data Ecology collects to help set priorities, evaluate programs, and respond to new laws. We strive to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of waste and materials data to best support existing programs, new laws, emerging issues, and our partners' data needs.

Ecology and our partners want additional, timelier, and more transparent waste data for our state. The types of data we can collect are limited by constraints set in rules and statutes, time lags for processing data, and staffing resources to pursue data not required by statute or in rules.

---

[31] https://www.epa.gov/warm
[32] https://ecology.wa.gov/Research-Data/Data-resources/Solid-waste-recycling-data
[33] https://arcg.is/18KSS5

Data gaps

There are also data gaps or missing information that are crucial to measuring progress. Without new laws, rules, or funding there are no clear or easy solutions to address these data gaps. Long-identified data gaps include information about product sales and end markets for recyclable materials. We would like to collect more data on the distribution of products into the state and where and how recyclable material is used. The Recycling Reform Act, passed in 2025, will help address this gap once it is implemented in 2030. Ecology and our partners will continue to explore opportunities to address data gaps as new legislation is developed.

All levels of government are being asked to show meaningful results tied to environmental impacts. Washington's Legislature and Governor, as well as Ecology's Director, are interested in agency effectiveness and using data to help set priorities. With increasing emphasis on showing results in a meaningful way, Ecology and our partners must think strategically about where to focus data collection and analysis efforts, how to improve data collection, and address gaps.

Education and outreach

The State Plan's success relies in part on providing effective outreach and information to partners and the public on materials management issues. Outreach keeps partners informed of laws, rules, programs, data, research, and other developments.

From 2021 to 2025, Ecology conducted numerous campaigns to support plan efforts. These included a Recycle Right campaign, a Use Food Well campaign, a statewide Bring Your Own Cup campaign, and a multi-faceted We Keep WA Litter Free prevention campaign. These efforts were coordinated with local governments, included tool kits for others to use, and provided outreach materials like videos, social media, and other resources in Spanish and English.

Ecology is committed to ensuring that diverse audiences have meaningful access to services and information and can provide input on policy directions. This means continually evaluating the intended audience and planning for inclusive engagement that reflects the languages, cultures, literacy, abilities, and other needs of the audience.

Despite the growing demand for outreach and information, funding is limited. The effectiveness of campaigns and other outreach can be hard to measure, which may make it harder to justify sustained investment when funding is down. Our engagement and outreach practices are grounded in the agency's environmental justice obligations under the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act [34] and compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.[35]

The complexity of the solid waste stream continues to increase, as do laws affecting materials management. Communication needs continue to grow as well. The many new requirements for organic material management, product restrictions or bans, and the Recycling Reform Act demands significant outreach to the public and our affected partners. Without outreach, goals

[34] https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.02
[35] https://www.justice.gov/crt/fcs/TitleVI

will not be met. As new laws are implemented, outreach to participants for rule-writing, advisory committee participation, registration, and other work is needed.

Ongoing outreach

Reducing waste, encouraging reuse and repair, and preventing littering is not possible without clear, culturally relevant, and effective communication to promote changes in behaviors.

To advance the State Plan's goals and implement current laws, ongoing outreach is needed, with our partners, to deliver messages to a wide variety of audiences. These include:

- Reducing food waste, reducing contamination in collected organic materials, and promoting the benefits of using compost and other recycled organic products.
- Encouraging waste reduction, reuse, reduced consumption, and informing on the connection between waste, materials, and climate.
- Promoting environmentally preferred purchasing and responsible products.
- Informing about proper recycling to reduce contamination.
- Preventing littering behaviors.

As this plan is being written, the state is facing budget shortfalls, which will result in less outreach funding. Finding creative and cost-effective ways to address ongoing outreach is needed, including partnerships with service providers and producers.

Further, Washington's population of residents who do not speak English as their primary language is one of the largest and fastest growing in the United States. This creates increased need for culturally effective communication strategies, and for evaluating and strengthening outreach for non-English-speaking communities. Translation and co-creation with partners who reflect these communities' languages and cultures is vital. One example is the waste container colors and labels law, which haulers and local governments will implement.

Demographics

Population and demographics influence resource use, waste generation, needs for services, outreach, and environmental justice considerations. The increase in our population and the diversity of our state residents affects how we do our work.

Although growth has slowed, Washington's population and its ethnic and racial diversity continue to increase. As of April 2026, Washington's population was estimated at 8.1 million people.[36] Data from the U.S. Census from 2024-25 showed Washington was one of the states with the fastest population growth in the nation. Washington's language diversity is also increasing. As of 2024, 21 percent of Washington's population speaks a language other than English at home.[37] After English, Spanish is the most commonly spoken language in the state, followed by Chinese and Vietnamese.[38]

---

[36] April 1 population estimates press release (wa.gov)
[37] https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/statewide-data/washington-trends/social-economic-conditions/language-spoken-home
[38] https://datausa.io/profile/geo/washington/#demographics

Environmental justice

Ecology is committed to environmental justice and to the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and respect. Overburdened communities and vulnerable populations often face disproportionate and cumulative environmental health impacts from exposure to pollution, toxic or hazardous substances, and climate change. These populations are more likely to experience greater environmental harm and have limited access to environmental benefits. Ecology works to address these inequities by promoting fair treatment, meaningful involvement in decision-making, and equitable access to resources and environmental benefits.

The passage of the HEAL Act in 2021 brings increased direction and resources for Ecology's environmental justice work. As required by state law, Ecology conducts environmental justice assessments for all rulemakings, agency request legislation, and other significant agency actions. These reviews are meant to identify and address disproportionate impacts and to support fair and meaningful involvement of overburdened communities and vulnerable populations. This includes identifying and considering overburdened communities and vulnerable populations and strengthening access for people with limited English proficiency.

We use environmental justice mapping and data tools to guide our work and inform decision making. For example, we leverage the Department of Health's Environmental Health Disparities Map, which assesses exposure, vulnerability, and cumulative risk across census tracts in Washington. We also share data on service distribution and environmental impacts with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations.

In addition, we follow the HEAL Act's uniform approach for identifying overburdened communities and vulnerable populations, drawing on the Overburdened Communities Map and indicators from tools such as the Office of Financial Management datasets and U.S. Census Bureau resources. We share information on environmental burdens, benefits, and program services with communities and stakeholders, especially those identified as overburdened or vulnerable. Ecology aims to promote transparent, equitable decision-making, and meaningful community involvement.

We create communication strategies, outreach materials, and public engagement activities that are inclusive and accessible. This helps ensure that overburdened communities and vulnerable populations have access to services and information and can provide input on policy directions.

Policy approaches

As a state agency, Ecology's work is driven by laws passed in Washington's legislature. Policies affecting solid waste management intend to reduce the impacts of products in the way they are manufactured, labeled, transported, distributed, littered, or collected for disposal or recycling. Certain products carry requirements to contain recycled content, while others are restricted in their use or distribution. Depending on the problems being addressed, policies can target different audiences, such as producers or food service businesses, using different tools, such as penalties or incentives.

Once a law is passed, Ecology identifies the necessary resources for implementation, works with affected groups, and communicates the new requirements. This work can include

DRAFT

implementing directives and interpreting the law's intent. Some laws can be implemented as written, while others require rulemaking, which follows a legal public process to clarify the law.

Policy ideas to address waste and material management needs are frequently introduced in our state, and around the country and the globe. As new products are created and distributed, new methods are often proposed to handle their waste. We analyze policy ideas to determine if they advance the goals of the State Plan, and our legislative orders to reduce waste and toxic substances and protect human and environmental health.

Ideally, policies consider life cycle impacts, avoid creating unintended consequences, and provide effective solutions to real problems. Key policy approaches that support sustainable materials management are discussed in the following section.

Producer responsibility

The involvement of producers, the companies who make, distribute and sell products, is vital to achieving sustainable solid waste management. Producers typically have the greatest ability to minimize adverse impacts of their products. Through producer responsibility laws, such as the Recycling Reform Act, producers have a responsibility to help manage the products at end-of-life, within the materials management system.

Bills are regularly introduced to Washington's legislature to increase producer responsibility for hard-to-manage products. These laws, sometimes categorized as product stewardship or extended producer responsibility, aim to increase collection, reuse, and recycling of toxic or problematic products and provide equitable access to services. These programs can advance sustainable financing for end-of-life management, improve access to recycling, increase collection rates, and encourage products to be designed for recyclability and circularity.

Ecology supports producer responsibility programs[39] that complement existing collection and waste management infrastructure, cover fair and reasonable costs, collect robust data, and provide inclusive, accessible outreach. Ecology provides oversight for the following producer responsibility programs in Washington:

- E-Cycle Washington (chapter 70A.500 RCW) is responsible for establishing collection sites for televisions, computers, and other electronics.
- LightRecycle (chapter 70A.505 RCW) is a program that collects and recycles mercury-containing light bulbs.
- Paint stewardship (chapter 70A.515 RCW), also known as Paint Care, establishes collection sites for architectural paint.
- The Recycling Reform Act (chapter 70A.208 RCW), which will be implemented in 2030, establishes producer responsibility for residential paper and packaging products.
- Battery stewardship program (chapter 70A.555 RCW) will create a statewide collection system for portable and medium-format batteries.

[39] Our recycling programs - Washington State Department of Ecology

- Photovoltaic module stewardship and takeback program (chapter 70A.510 RCW) will require convenient and environmentally sound collection and recycling of photovoltaic modules.

The Drug Takeback Program (chapter 69.48 RCW),[40] also known as Washington's Safe Medication Return Program, allows people to dispose of household over-the-counter and prescription medications for people and pets. Unlike the above-mentioned programs, the Washington Department of Health oversees the program.

Post-consumer recycled content

Another form of producer responsibility is using post-consumer recycled content in product manufacturing. Using post-consumer recycled content can help drive markets for recycled materials and replace some virgin material use, which reduces climate and other environmental impacts. Numerous consumer goods companies and packaging associations have made pledges to meet various levels of post-consumer recycled content in their products by a certain time. Most of these pledges have been delayed due to challenges and costs of using this content. Often it is easier or less costly to use virgin materials.

In 2021, Washington established post-consumer recycled content minimums[41] for a number of plastics containers (chapter 70A.245 RCW).[42] This includes plastic beverage bottles, plastic bottles for personal care and household cleaning products, and plastic trash bags, with requirements increasing over time.

There is a limited supply of recycled content material, so meeting pledges or requirements is challenging. Requirements to use post-consumer recycled content in packaging may help improve recycling programs and create more supply, but that policy alone is not sufficient to address all problems with the recycling system.

Environmentally preferable purchasing

Environmentally preferable purchasing (EPP), also called green purchasing or circular procurement, is also needed to advance sustainable materials management. EPP is the practice of procuring goods and services that cause less harm to humans and the environment than competing goods and services that serve the same purpose. This includes prioritizing products that are free from toxic chemicals of concern, repairable, durable, recyclable, or made from recycled and renewable materials.

EPP emphasizes smarter product design, service-based models, extended product use, and responsible recycling.

Washington has a broad and long-standing mandate for EPP activities that includes laws and executive orders directing state agencies to purchase environmentally preferred products. This

[40] https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=69.48
[41] https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/guidance-technical-assistance/recycled-content-products
[42] https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.245

leverages state government purchasing power to increase availability of environmentally preferable products. The laws and executive orders guiding EPP include:

- Recycled Product Procurement[43] (1991) intends to increase the purchase of products with recycled content by public agencies, such as office supplies, landscaping products, and re-refined motor oil.
- Procurement of Goods and Services[44] (2012) states that an agency may consider best value criteria, including whether the bid considers human health and environmental impacts, in determining the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.
- Executive Order 20-01, State Efficiency and Environmental Performance[45] (SEEP), updated by Governor Inslee in 2020, directs Ecology and the Department of Enterprise Services to provide state agencies with guidance on EPP.
- Use of Compost Products in Projects[46] (2020) encourages state and local agencies to purchase and use compost, recognizing the importance of composting to waste and carbon-reduction goals.

In addition to state directives, some local governments and other political subdivisions have adopted EPP practices to help reduce their impact on Washington's environment and human health.

Product verification and labeling

In addition, helping the public identify and support "green" products is important. Greenwashing, in which false claims are made about the environmental attributes of products, is common. The Federal Trade Commission's "Green Guides"[47] provides directions to producers on proper labeling for environmental claims. The guides address claims concerning how a product is made (e.g. with recycled content or using renewable energy), how to dispose of it (e.g. recyclable or compostable), and what it does or does not contain (such as certain toxic chemicals). These guides are not legally binding. Ecology supports clear and accurate terms as well as third-party certifications of a product's environmental claims.

Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) are standardized and transparent reporting of a product's environmental impacts throughout its lifecycle. EPDs are based on parameters set by the International Organization for Standardization[48] and require verification to ensure credibility. EPDs are also tied to life-cycle assessments, which provide a specific and thorough analysis of environmental impact of a product across each stage of its life cycle.

[43] http://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=43.19A
[44] http://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=39.26
[45] https://governor.wa.gov/office-governor/office/official-actions/executive-orders
[46] https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=43.19A.120
[47] Eco-Friendly and Green Marketing Claims | Consumer Advice
[48] https://www.iso.org/home.html

Washington's compostable product labeling requirements (chapter 70A.455 RCW)[49] set color, label, and compostable certification standards for compostable packaging. This law intends to reduce confusion for consumers and contamination at compost facilities.

Third-party certifications, truthful labeling of environmental claims, and environmental product declarations are important tools for good sustainable materials management policies.

Reuse, refill, and repair

Extending the life of products helps reduce consumption and the associated environmental impacts and is typically far more efficient than recycling a product and making a new one. For these reasons, Ecology supports policies and programs that advance reuse, refill, and repair.

Support for reuse, refill, and repair is growing and stems in part out of concern about non-recyclable packaging, single-use products, and planned obsolescence. Organizations supporting reuse and refill systems are developing rapidly.

Washington has recently adopted several strategies to support reuse and refill programs. Washington's 2025 Recycling Reform Act includes a producer-funded $5 million annual reuse financial assistance program, starting in 2029, to grow the packaging reuse economy in the state. Additionally, the local and statewide "Bring Your Own Cup" campaigns encourage businesses and residents to reuse thermoses and durable cups rather than using disposable options.

Right-to-repair bills have now been introduced in all 50 states and passed in eight states. Washington's Legislature passed two right-to-repair bills into law in 2025, one covering most consumer electronics and appliances (chapter 19.415 RCW),[50] and another covering powered wheelchairs (chapter 19.425 RCW).[51]

While right-to-repair is important, other steps to move away from planned obsolescence are needed. Since 2022, the European Union (EU) has required a two-year warranty on purchased goods[52] with the seller required to repair or replace items. Some European countries have a longer warranty period. In 2024, the EU passed further rules requiring the producers to repair broken major appliances and smart phones.[53]

Life cycle approach and focus on impactful materials

From manufacturing to disposal, products use resources or generate pollutants at nearly every stage of their life cycle (Figure 1). As described in the "Approach" section of this Plan, most of a material's impact comes from its production and use, not from end-of-life management. This is why we want policies to consider the full life cycle of materials. In doing so, we can identify where the biggest impacts are and work to reduce them.

---

[49] https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=70A.455
[50] https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=19.415&full=true#19.415.005
[51] https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=19.425&full=true
[52] https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/consumers/shopping/guarantees-returns/index_en.htm
[53] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20240419IPR20590/right-to-repair-making-repair-easier-and-more-appealing-to-consumers

Current tools help us evaluate what materials might have significant impacts, including climate impacts, which can be used to direct our work to areas of most need and opportunity. While there are tools to look at life cycle impacts, more research is needed to fully assess impacts and make educated decisions to reduce impacts.

Single-use product restrictions and bans

In recent decades the use of plastic and disposable products has greatly increased, leading to a need to address overuse, waste, and litter. Washington's Legislature passed several laws banning or otherwise regulating plastic products including the single-use plastic bag ban (chapter 70A.530 RCW),[54] the expanded polystyrene ban (RCW 70A.245.070),[55] the single-use serviceware law (RCW 70A.245.140),[56] and the mini toiletries in lodgings law (RCW 70A.245.140).[56]

Policies that restrict product sales and use aim to reduce problematic waste, litter, harm to the environment, or health hazards to Washington's residents. However, before bans and product restrictions are enacted they need careful consideration of the life cycle impacts of alternative products and possible unintended consequences.

Some policies focus on attributes, such as requiring products to be reusable, recyclable, or compostable. Recently, several Washington cities have passed local ordinances that require takeout containers to be recyclable or compostable and dine-in serviceware to be reusable. Many companies have pledged to make their packaging reusable, recyclable, or compostable by 2030. This is similar to the goal called for in the Ellen MacArthur New Plastics Economy[57] resource. While this sounds positive, some life cycle analyses note that not all these goals may provide for the best environmental impact. For example, some compostable packaging can have a larger environmental footprint than plastic packaging, due to the water and fuel needed to grow the materials.[58] In some cases, reducing the total amount of materials used, even if the materials are not recyclable or compostable, can be the most beneficial from a life cycle perspective.

The goal of making packaging and products reusable, recyclable, or compostable may not be beneficial or achievable for some companies. Therefore, policies should thoroughly consider the impacts, achievability, and consequences. These are the types of policies that will support and advance sustainable materials management.

[54] https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.530
[55] https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.245.070
[56] https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.245.140
[57] https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/our-work/activities/new-plastics-economy
[58] https://www.oregon.gov/deq/mm/production/Pages/Materials-Attributes.aspx

Section 4: Plan Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Facilities

Solid waste handling facilities protect public health and the environment. Their proper operation is essential to the success of Washington's overall waste and materials management system. Ensuring these facilities comply with regulations helps prevent environmental releases, supports public trust, and ensures safe, effective management of waste and materials across the state.

Ecology approaches oversight first with technical assistance, emphasizing prevention and corrective action. By working closely with local governments, facility operators, and health departments, the state can identify and resolve compliance challenges, promote safer facility operations, and ensure consistent enforcement across the system.

FACILTIES GOAL: Solid waste handling facilities comply with all regulatory requirements and promptly conduct corrective actions to remedy any noncompliance or environmental release.

OBJECTIVE 1: Provide ongoing technical assistance and enforcement, when necessary, to facilities and jurisdictional health departments to help facilities comply with regulations and minimize adverse environmental impacts.

STRATEGIES:

- Work with local governments, facility representatives, industry associations, advocacy organizations, and other stakeholders to address and overcome barriers to facility compliance.
- Inspect exempt facilities to verify conditionally exempt status and assess compliance.

OBJECTIVE 2: Focus on landfill operation compliance including co-approval of permit actions.

STRATEGIES:

- Provide technical assistance to facility owners and jurisdictional health departments for landfill operation, closure, and clean up. Assistance includes landfill monitoring, post-closure care guidance, and implementation of cleanup actions at landfills that experienced uncontrolled contaminant releases to the environment.
- Ensure facilities meet state eligibility criteria for grant funding to use for cleanup actions if necessary.
- Use authority under solid waste laws and regulations to implement cleanup actions at landfills that experience uncontrolled contaminant releases (air or water) to the environment.

OBJECTIVE 3: Stay informed of solid waste and material recovery technologies, such as chemical recycling, pyrolysis, and gasification, to provide technical assistance on managing solid waste in line with the state's waste management hierarchy.

OBJECTIVE 4: Improve compliance at MRW facilities.

Financing

Much of Washington state's solid waste system financing relies on solid waste disposal fees or tipping fees, along with service charges and some grant funding. If we are successful at reducing waste disposal, a significant source of solid waste financing could also be reduced. New funding structures or funding from grants, producer responsibility programs, and taxes will be critical to support local waste prevention and reduction programs, and solid waste infrastructure maintenance and development.

FINANCING GOAL: Sufficient, equitable, and sustainable funding sources and grant programs are in place for Washington's solid waste and materials management system. Funding supports and advances waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and proper waste management.

OBJECTIVE 1: Support and promote financing mechanisms and recommendations based on current knowledge while continuing to evaluate and research additional funding mechanisms and solutions.

STRATEGIES:

- Share research and recommendations from past studies and any new findings.
- Support efforts to advance recommended funding mechanisms.

OBJECTIVE 2: Provide grants and help grant recipients implement programs to manage waste streams.

STRATEGIES:

- Use grants to support the waste management hierarchy, meet local needs, and comply with regulatory requirements.
- Incorporate equitable and inclusive approaches and environmental justice into grant programs.

Litter

Despite ongoing litter pickup programs and prevention campaigns, crews cannot keep up with the amount of litter generated. Additional funding and prevention campaigns and cleanup efforts are needed to address the nearly 38 million pounds of litter accumulating each year along roadways and public areas.

LITTER GOAL: Effective and equitable programs and policies prevent and pick up litter.

OBJECTIVE 1: Create and implement an effective, inclusive, litter-prevention campaign.

STRATEGIES:

- Use a social marketing framework that is embraced by diverse stakeholders and residents.
- Target specific behaviors and the most heavily littered materials in prevention efforts.

OBJECTIVE 2: Complete a comprehensive litter study every five years and use the results to evaluate litter prevention and cleanup efforts and make funding and policy recommendations, including adding items to the litter tax statute to accurately reflect what is littered.

OBJECTIVE 3: Regularly analyze the efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and safety of litter programs and policies and make appropriate updates and improvements.

STRATEGIES:

- Share litter pickup metrics and data on our website.

OBJECTIVE 4: Partner with others to prevent and pick up litter and illegal dumps.

STRATEGIES:

- Lead a partnership of state, county, and local agencies to pick up litter and illegal dumps through the Community Litter Cleanup Program, Ramp Litter Cleanup Program, and funding for other state agencies.
- Oversee the Ecology Litter Corps and contracted litter crews.
- Collaborate with non-governmental organizations, community groups, and producers to advance litter prevention and pick-up efforts.

Moderate risk waste

Moderate Risk Waste (MRW) includes hazardous waste from households (household hazardous waste) and hazardous waste from small quantity generators (businesses that create less than 220 pounds of hazardous waste each month, called "small quantity generators"). MRW materials are corrosive, toxic, ignitable, or reactive, and pose risks to the environment and human health if improperly disposed.

Local governments provide safe collection and disposal services for household hazardous waste and are encouraged to assist with small quantity generator waste. Local governments are required to provide ongoing public education for managing MRW. Providing these services is costly and many local governments rely on state funds from LSWFA grants to partially cover these costs. Even when state grant programs are fully funded, there's not enough money to cover local government MRW programs and all the other waste management programs, like recycling and organics operations. Some local governments experience gaps in providing adequate services for MRW.

Producer responsibility programs reduce some of the financial burden on local governments for safe MRW management. While none of Washington's producer responsibility programs address MRW broadly, some local governments and partners want to bring MRW programs like those in Canada and Vermont to Washington.

While safe collection for MRW is crucial, there is an even greater need to reduce the use of these materials and identify safer alternatives.

MODERATE RISK WASTE GOAL: MRW programs provide safe, accessible services for residents, businesses, and underserved communities to recycle or dispose of hazardous waste.

OBJECTIVE 1: Increase MRW safe handling and management.

STRATEGIES:

- Explore and promote options to increase household hazardous waste collection especially for underserved areas and multi-family residences.
- Advocate for new producer responsibility programs for toxic or hard-to-handle products, including household hazardous waste, to increase producer responsibility to reduce toxicity of products and increase recycling access across the state.
- Encourage counties with household hazardous waste programs to expand to accept small quantity generator waste.
- Small quantity generators coordinate with local governments and utilize Ecology's Pollution Prevention Assistance program and Product Replacement Program.
- Promote options for safe handling, disposal, recycling, and reduction of hazardous materials use and waste generation.
- Coordinate with partners to provide inclusive and effective education and outreach to residents and small businesses on MRW safe handling and disposal options, and less-toxic alternatives.

OBJECTIVE 2: Support recycling, reuse, and reduction of MRW materials.

STRATEGIES:

- Promote opportunities to increase reuse and recycling of MRW as appropriate.
- Stay abreast of new technologies and markets for reuse and recycling of MRW materials.

OBJECTIVE 3: Provide outreach about safer products and alternatives to MRW materials.

STRATEGIES:

- Coordinate with partners to provide inclusive and effective education and outreach efforts to residents and small businesses on safer products and less-or non-toxic alternatives.

Organics

Organic materials, including food scraps, yard debris, pet, and wood waste, make up nearly one-quarter of the waste disposed of in Washington landfills. When disposed, these materials generate methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Wasted food also represents lost water, energy, labor, and transportation resources used to grow, process, and deliver it.

Washington's food waste reduction and organics management laws (Food Waste Reduction Act (2019),[59] and three additional organics management laws (2022,[60] 2024,[61] 2025[62]) prioritize preventing food waste, rescuing edible food for people, and diverting remaining organic

[59] https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=70A.205.715
[60] https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/?BillNumber=1799&Year=2021&Initiative=false
[61] https://app.leg.wa.gov/BillSummary/?BillNumber=2301&Year=2023&Initiative=false
[62] https://app.leg.wa.gov/BillSummary/?BillNumber=1497&Year=2025&Initiative=false

materials from disposal. These laws establish requirements for edible food recovery, organics collection, and organics processing. Ecology works with local governments, businesses, service providers, facilities, nonprofit organizations, Tribes, and communities to implement these requirements and build an effective, equitable organics management system.

Ecology's Organics Management Law webpage[63] outlines the laws and actions that state and local governments, residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations must follow.

ORGANICS GOAL: Wasted food and other organic wastes are prevented, reduced, recovered, and beneficially used. Progress on food waste reduction and organics diversion goals are made possible by sufficient infrastructure and viable end markets.

OBJECTIVE 1: Prevent food waste and increase edible food recovery by implementing the Use Food Well Washington Plan by prioritizing food waste prevention, edible food rescue, and recovery across the food system.

STRATEGIES:

- Collaborate with state, local, Tribal, community, nonprofit, and industry partners to deliver food waste prevention education, outreach, and behavior-change initiatives, with emphasis on high-volume food-generating sectors.
- Increase the safe recovery and distribution of nutritious, edible food by addressing operational, logistical, regulatory, and other barriers to food donation and food rescue.
- Improve measurement and accountability for prevention and recovery by supporting common tools and metrics for food waste prevention, edible food recovery, and food donation tracking.

OBJECTIVE 2: Build a resilient statewide organics system by implementing Washington's organics management laws to reduce organic material disposal by 75 percent by 2030 and expand equitable access to organics collection, processing, and beneficial use.

STRATEGIES:

- Provide coordinated implementation support—including guidance, technical assistance, planning tools, grants, and peer learning—to local governments, Tribes, businesses, service providers, facilities, food recovery organizations, and other partners.
- Identify and address gaps in organics collection, transfer, and processing capacity by supporting appropriately scaled centralized, regional, and local systems; reducing barriers related to siting, permitting, financing, transportation, workforce, and feedstock quality; and prioritizing areas with limited service or infrastructure.
- Improve organics processing performance and material quality by supporting contamination prevention, odor and emissions management, operational improvements, and responses to emerging issues such as compostable packaging, PFAS, microplastics, and other non-organic contaminants.

[63] https://ecology.wa.gov/waste-toxics/reducing-recycling-waste/organics-and-food-waste/2022-organics-management-law

OBJECTIVE 3: Strengthen end markets, data, and continuous improvement to increase beneficial use of recovered organic materials. Use data, research, and performance monitoring to improve organics management statewide.

STRATEGIES:

- Expand reliable end markets for Washington-produced compost and other recovered organic products through state and local procurement, coordination with agriculture and public works programs, and support for uses such as soil health, stormwater management, erosion control, landscaping, and habitat restoration.
- Track progress toward statutory goals and improve statewide data on food waste generation, edible food recovery, organics collection and processing, disposal, contamination, product quality, and related reimbursement programs.
- Improve implementation by evaluating new technologies and practices, identifying policy and market barriers, sharing findings, and informing future rulemaking and program decisions.

Planning

Waste management planning is required by statute, both for the state and local governments. Ecology provides planning assistance to local governments, including guidelines, data, and other resources. The State Plan outlines the path for the state and partners to manage solid waste and materials for the greatest environmental benefit. Input from partners and the public is an important element of both state and local plan development.

PLANNING GOAL: The State Solid Waste Management Plan provides a framework for local government and other partners to manage waste responsibly, implement sustainable funding structures, and work together on priority materials. Local governments use their local Plans and keep them current.

OBJECTIVE 1: Local solid waste and hazardous waste management plans are up to date and contain policies and programs to safely and effectively manage waste in their jurisdictions.

STRATEGIES:

- Provide assistance to local governments to help them plan within and across jurisdictions.
- Maintain local planning guidelines and the Planning and Waste Reduction Resource Library.

OBJECTIVE 2: Local plans reflect ways to reduce life cycle impacts of materials and waste generation, promote reuse, responsible recycling, and support sustainable finance mechanisms.

STRATEGIES:

- Provide lifecycle analysis data to help jurisdictions prioritize materials management to reduce, reuse, and recover solid waste.

OBJECTIVE 3: Local Solid Waste Advisory Committees are aware of the State Plan goals, objectives, and strategies. Local Plans are prepared with the active assistance of a Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

STRATEGIES:

- Share assistance and information on:
  - Waste generation, recovery rates, and reuse and reduction data calculation methods for local governments.
  - Demographic data, health disparities mapping tools, and advice to local Solid Waste Advisory Committees to ensure equity/environmental justice in community solid waste management.
  - Guidance and template language to support jurisdictions with updates to solid waste management plans.
  - Effective options for recycling and organics collection, such as self-haul, material recovery facility-sheds, designated recyclables lists, and hub-and-spoke collection models.

Problematic materials

Certain materials are problematic and pose unique management challenges in Washington's waste stream, including: construction debris, plastics, textiles, and tires.

These materials often fall outside the scope of recycling programs, lack responsible recycling options, are costly to manage safely, or persist in the environment as pollution. New materials and emerging waste streams can present challenges the waste system is not prepared to manage. While Washington has made progress through targeted product restriction laws and bans and producer responsibility programs. gaps remain in access, infrastructure, and producer accountability.

Reducing the harms associated with problematic and hard-to-handle materials requires a comprehensive approach. Ongoing research, effective policy development, and strong implementation of existing laws are all needed to improve collection, expand reduction, reuse, and recycling opportunities. Through collaboration with local governments, producers, and stakeholders, Washington can continue to advance effective and equitable strategies that reduce risk and improve outcomes across all sectors of the materials system.

PROBLEMATIC MATERIALS GOAL: Problematic and hard-to-handle materials in the waste stream are reduced, reused, recycled, and safely disposed through research, collaborative stakeholder efforts, and thoughtful policy solutions.

CONSTRUCTION DEBRIS

CONSTRUCTION DEBRIS OBJECTIVE 1: Work to decrease the amount of construction and demolition material disposed of by reducing construction waste, increasing reuse, and recycling of materials.

STRATEGIES:

- Promote green building design, and construction and deconstruction practices for residential and commercial buildings.
- Support expanding capacity and markets for reusing and recycling construction and demolition materials.

CONSTRUCTION DEBRIS OBJECTIVE 2: Reduce embodied carbon in building materials.

STRATEGIES:

- Support Environmental Product Declarations for construction materials and requirements for their use.

CONSTRUCTION DEBRIS OBJECTIVE 3: Increase compliance with applicable recycling laws to reduce sham recycling.

STRATEGIES:

- Work to register transporters and ensure Transporter Law provisions are implemented.
- Work with Utilities and Transportation Commission, local governments, and recycling businesses to uphold and enforce the Transporter Law, and other recycling laws, rules, and requirements.

PLASTICS

PLASTICS OBJECTIVE 1: Build and maintain a solid understanding of plastics issues and potential ways to reduce negative impacts of plastics. Evaluate policy solutions and promote policies with the best impacts.

STRATEGIES:

- Stay abreast of end-markets and emerging technologies.
- Study life cycle impacts of marine debris and micro-plastic pollution.
- Understand any negative outcomes to shifting away from single-use, virgin and other problematic plastics, and share with partners.
- Explore options to minimize environmental impacts of plastic packaging, single-use plastic products, and other problematic plastics.
- Promote efforts to design packaging for reuse or increased recyclability where appropriate.

PLASTICS OBJECTIVE 2: Implement plastic reduction initiatives and laws as they are enacted, to reduce single-use plastics and plastic pollution, improve recyclability, increase the use of recycled content, and other efforts to lessen plastic use and impacts.

STRATEGIES:

- Provide technical assistance and compliance enforcement with regulated producers.
- Identify alternative material options for problematic plastic uses.

TEXTILES

TEXTILES OBJECTIVE 1: Build and maintain knowledge of textile issues and potential ways to reduce negative impacts of textiles. Evaluate policy solutions and promote policies with effective and beneficial impacts.

STRATEGIES:

- Continue building partnerships and sharing information to find solutions to the growing textile waste stream.
- Support innovation research in textile reuse and recycling.

TEXTILES OBJECTIVE 2: Decrease the amount of textile materials disposed of by increasing reuse, repurpose, and recycling of materials.

STRATEGIES:

- Support expanding markets for textile reuse, repurpose, and recycling.
- Support innovation in textile reuse, repurpose, and recycling through NextCycle and other grant and technical assistance programs.

TIRES

TIRES OBJECTIVES 1: Waste tires are managed properly to reduce accumulations of waste tires that present fire hazards, habitat for pests, and other environmental hazards. When possible, tires are reused or recycled to their highest value.

STRATEGIES:

- Allocate funding to cleanup tires that are dumped illegally.
- Provide technical assistance and outreach (such as the litter campaign) to prevent further dumping, accumulation, and non-permitted waste tire piles.
- Oversee businesses that haul, store, or dispose of waste tires.

Producer Responsibility

Producer responsibility programs aim to increase collection, reuse, and recycling of toxic or hard-to-handle products and packaging and provide equitable access to collection services. These programs support sustainable financing for end-of-life management, improve access to services, increase collection rates, and encourage better product design. Ecology supports programs that use and complement existing collection and waste management infrastructure, cover fair and reasonable costs, collect robust data, and provide inclusive, accessible outreach.

Producer responsibility programs require manufacturers to share responsibility for the end-of-life management of their products, offering convenient collection options for the public and reducing financial burdens on local governments.

Ecology oversees six producer responsibility laws, including programs for electronics, mercury-containing lights, photovoltaic modules, paint, batteries, and packaging and paper products. The Washington Department of Health oversees the producer responsibility program for over the counter and prescription medications.

PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY GOAL: Producer responsibility programs provide equitable, accessible collection, reuse, recycling, and safe disposal of toxic or hard-to-handle products and packaging.

OBJECTIVE 1: Increase producer responsibility programs in the state where appropriate.

STRATEGIES:

- Advocate for new and effective product stewardship programs and other producer-led initiatives for toxic or hard-to-handle products. These programs, supported by legislature and Ecology, will improve collection, recycling, reuse, and reduction opportunities across the state.

OBJECTIVE 2: Support current producer responsibility programs.

STRATEGIES:

- Oversee law implementation, actively supporting operation and improvements to existing programs.

OBJECTIVE 3: Use experience from existing program implementation to guide future producer responsibility programs.

STRATEGIES:

- Track policy developments in other jurisdictions.
- Explore ways to use producer responsibility or other strategies to incentivize manufacturers to reduce their products' environmental impacts.

Recycling

Washington's recycling system faces ongoing challenges in market instability and contamination. There is uneven access to services, and inconsistent collection options for certain materials, particularly in rural communities. These issues show the need for expanded local infrastructure and program consistency across the state.

The passage of the Recycling Reform Act in 2025 was a major step toward addressing these issues in the residential sector. However, significant gaps remain in other sectors and for many problematic materials. As Washington develops and implements the Recycling Reform Act in the coming years, additional efforts are needed to strengthen market development, improve collected material quality, and ensure broad participation across all sectors.

RECYCLING GOAL: Recyclable materials are collected and managed responsibly through a clear and consistent system, maximizing resource recovery and minimizing environmental impact.

OBJECTIVE 1: Support development and use of responsible, reliable markets providing usable feedstocks for remanufacturing from major sectors and waste streams.

STRATEGIES:

- Provide business assistance, resources, and funding support for responsible recycling market development and innovative waste reduction efforts.

- Promote use of recycled material feedstocks and recycled-content products.
- Collaborate across similar industries and regional markets and coordinate with local and regional partners.
- Conduct research, evaluate data, and analyze policies on material markets, reuse, and waste reduction to improve the circular use of materials in Washington.

OBJECTIVE 2: Increase access to and participation in recycling programs by residential, industrial, commercial, and institutional generators.

STRATEGIES:

- Implement the Recycling Reform Act for consumer packaging and paper products.
- Explore opportunities and solutions for recyclable material streams from industrial, commercial, and institutional generators, and develop strategies and recommendations to address their specific challenges.

OBJECTIVE 3: Promote and maintain best management practices for curbside and drop-box recycling to yield high-value feedstocks and minimize contamination.

STRATEGIES:

- Provide outreach and information about reducing contamination and implementing best recycling management practices to improve the quality of collected materials.

Reducing waste and impacts

Washington has long recognized waste prevention and reduction as the most effective way to minimize environmental harm and conserve resources throughout the materials lifecycle. This priority continues to guide efforts to prevent waste generation and promote more sustainable production, consumption, and disposal practices that support the state's waste reduction goals.

While recycling is important, it is insufficient to address the upstream drivers of waste and pollution alone. Reducing the use of single-use items, promoting environmentally preferable products, and encouraging manufacturers to take responsibility for the impacts of their materials are critical steps. Advancing this work will require commitment as well as research, collaboration, and coordinated action across sectors to achieve reductions in waste and environmental impacts.

REDUCING WASTE AND IMPACTS GOAL: Reduce climate and other environmental impacts of waste and materials throughout their lifecycle.

OBJECTIVE 1: Research and promote how best to reduce waste and environmental impacts of products and packaging, based on key impact assessments on the production, use, reuse, and end-of-life phases of materials.

STRATEGIES:

- Analyze policy solutions and determine effective strategies for addressing waste and impact reduction.

- Use the consumption-based emissions analysis, EPA's Waste Reduction Model (WARM), the Waste Impact Calculator (WIC), and other publicly available life cycle models and tools to develop recommendations.
- Encourage manufacturers to complete self-evaluations on their products and processes, such as life cycle analyses or Environmental Product Declarations, and to make improvements.
- Engage with manufacturers to advance sustainability of products and packaging. Encourage design that reduces climate and other environmental impacts, reduces waste and toxicity, and enables reuse, repair, or recycling.
- Share information about the relationship between climate change and waste reduction, consumption, and materials management.

OBJECTIVE 2: Promote the use and benefits of environmentally responsible products and services for public and private sectors.

STRATEGIES:

- Incorporate reduction and reuse into government procurement, policies, and existing materials.
- Engage in regional and national efforts to ensure labels, symbols, messages, environmental product declarations, and other claims regarding reuse, recyclability, or compostability of products and packaging are effective, accurate, transparent and help reduce consumer confusion.

OBJECTIVE 3: Shift away from reliance on single-use products where environmentally preferable.

STRATEGIES:

- Study and share models of effective and successful reuse and sharing programs with local government, businesses, schools, hospitals, and others.
- Identify and work to eliminate potential barriers and create incentives for environmentally beneficial reuse and sharing systems.
- Promote reuse, refill, and repair, and help shift to durable, reusable, and less wasteful products through outreach materials and funding.

Glossary

This glossary is intended to provide definitions for terms and acronyms. Other terms may also be found in the solid waste law, RCW 70A.205.015[64]

Anaerobic digestion: The process of using bacteria to break down organic wastes in a low oxygen environment, resulting in a biogas rich in methane as well as liquid and solid residues.

Community Litter Cleanup Program (CLCP): Ecology grants to local governments to fund litter pickup, illegal dump cleanup, and litter prevention education.

Consumption: The use of a resource, product, or material. In the life cycle of a product, consumption typically refers to the stage where something is acquired and used, following the production stage and prior to end of life.

Consumption-Based Emissions Analysis (CBEA): An estimation of all of the greenhouse gas emissions associated with producing, transporting, using, and disposing of goods and services consumed by a jurisdiction in a given time period, wherever in the world those emissions are produced. Consumption-based emissions occur in other states or nations and are not included in the sector-based emissions analysis.

Disparities: Negative differences that do not imply unfairness; different than inequities, which are avoidable differences that result from a lack of fairness or justice.

Diversion: Waste diverted from landfills, which includes materials reused and burned for energy in addition to those that are recycled.

E-Cycle Washington: Washington's extended producer responsibility program for computers, monitors, laptops, tablet computers, televisions, portable DVD players, and e-readers.

End-of-Life: The point at which a product or material is no longer useful to the person possessing it and is discarded for disposal or recycling.

Environmental justice (EJ): The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, rules, and policies. Environmental justice includes addressing disproportionate environmental and health impacts in all laws, rules, and policies with environmental impacts by prioritizing vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, the equitable distribution of resources and benefits, and eliminating harm.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): The federal agency that leads the nation's environmental science, research, education, and assessment efforts. Created in 1970, EPA's mission is to protect human health and the environment.

Environmentally preferable purchasing (EPP): Also known as green or sustainable purchasing, this is the procurement of products or services that have lesser or reduced negative effect or increased positive to human health and the environment when compared with competing

[64] https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.205.015

products or services that serve the same purpose. The comparison may consider raw materials acquisition, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, durability, operation, maintenance, or disposal. This term includes low or non-toxic, durable, reusable, recyclable, and recycled (including compost) products or services, as well as those that conserve energy or natural resources.

Environmental product declaration (EPD): An EPD is a verified, standardized document that transparently communicates the environmental impacts of a product throughout its life cycle.

Extended producer responsibility (EPR): EPR is a mandatory type of product stewardship that includes, at a minimum, the requirement that the manufacturer's responsibility for its product extends to post-consumer management of that product and its packaging.

Equity: Equity focuses on eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of historically and currently oppressed groups. Equity is distinct from equality.

Feedstock: Materials needed to produce a product in a manufacturing or other process, including recycling, composting, and other waste-processing activities. Feedstocks can be virgin raw (new) materials or secondary (recovered or recycled) materials from the same or another process.

Hazardous waste: A waste with any of the following properties that make it dangerous or potentially harmful to human health or the environment: ignitable, corrosive, reactive, or toxic. Hazardous waste takes many physical forms and may be solid, semi-solid, liquid, or even contained gases. Washington state uses the term “dangerous waste” to describe hazardous wastes that are not in the federal definition of hazardous waste (for example, solid corrosive dangerous waste or listed PCB waste), or when referring to Washington state hazardous waste regulations (“Dangerous Waste Regulations”) in WAC 173-303.

Hazardous substances: Hazardous waste and materials, including toxic chemicals.

Household hazardous waste (HHW): Household products that contain corrosive, toxic, ignitable, or reactive ingredients. This includes any waste that exhibits the properties of hazardous waste but is exempt from the Washington State Dangerous Waste Regulations because it is generated by households.

LightRecycle Washington: Washington’s extended producer responsibility program for mercury-containing lights, including fluorescent tubes, compact fluorescent lights, and high-intensity discharge lights.

Life cycle: Consecutive and interlinked stages of a product or service system, from the extraction of resources to the final disposal.

Life cycle assessment/analysis (LCA): A systematic process to assess the environmental aspects and potential environmental impacts associated with products, processes, or services, through production, usage, and disposal.

Local Solid Waste Financial Assistance (LSWFA): Ecology grants that help local governments develop and implement their hazardous and solid waste management plans and provide solid waste enforcement. These grants are awarded once each biennium.

DRAFT

Materials: The substance or substances of which a thing is made or composed. The full range of materials that come from and return to the Earth such as wood, minerals, fuels, chemicals, agricultural plants and animals, soil, and rock.

Material recovery facility (MRF): A facility that collects, compacts, repackages, sorts, or processes for transport recyclable materials collected from curbside and other programs, for marketing to secondary processors, recyclers, or end-users.

Moderate risk waste (MRW): The combined hazardous waste stream made up of small quantity generator (SQG) waste and household hazardous waste (HHW). This term is unique to Washington state.

Organics materials (Organics): Substances and products of biological origin that have the potential to be returned to the soil, turned into biofuels, biopower, or other products. Organic materials include landscaping and yard waste, food waste, manures, crop residues, wood, soiled/low-grade paper, and biosolids.

Overburdened: Used to describe communities and populations that experience disproportionate environmental harms and risks due to exposures, greater vulnerability to environmental hazards, or cumulative impacts from multiple stressors.

PaintCare: Washington's extended producer responsibility program for architectural paints, primers, stains, sealers, and clear coatings such as shellac and varnish.

Public participation grant (PPG): Ecology grants that provide funding to individuals and not-for-profit public interest organizations to provide public involvement in monitoring the cleanup of contaminated sites and support the state plan goals.

Producer responsibility: The requirement that the manufacturer's or brand owner's responsibility for its product extends to post-consumer management of that product and its packaging. Other terms commonly used include product stewardship or extended producer responsibility.

Product: Something made or created by human or mechanical effort or by a natural process.

Product stewardship: A system where those who produce, sell, use, or dispose of a product assume responsibility for the product's environmental, health, social, and economic costs throughout the product's life cycle. The producer has the greatest ability to minimize adverse impacts, but other stakeholders share responsibility. Product stewardship can be either voluntary or required by law. Extended producer responsibility is a form of mandatory product stewardship.

Ramp Litter Cleanup Program (RLCP): Ecology grants to provide funding to local governments for litter cleanup on state highway ramps and interchanges.

Recovery: Material that is diverted from the solid waste stream for the intended purpose of recycling, composting, burning source-separated materials for energy, anaerobic digestion, land application, and other beneficial uses.

Reuse: The use of a product or component of municipal solid waste in its original form more than once.

DRAFT

Sham recycling: The collection of materials under false or illegal claims for the perceived purpose of recycling where the materials are instead disposed or indefinitely stockpiled rather than legitimately recycled.

Small quantity generator (SQG): A business, organization, industrial facility, or other type of establishment that creates 220 pounds or less of hazardous waste per month. The term conditionally exempt small quantity generator (CESQG) can also be used. Hazardous waste generated by an SQG is exempt from the Dangerous Waste Regulations if certain conditions are met.

Solid waste: As written in statute, solid waste means "all putrescible and nonputrescible solid and semisolid wastes including, but not limited to, garbage, rubbish, ashes, industrial wastes, swill, sewage sludge, demolition and construction wastes, abandoned vehicles or parts thereof, and recyclable materials."

Solid Waste Management (SWM): The Solid Waste Management program of the Washington State Department of Ecology. Formerly known as the Waste 2 Resources Program and the Solid Waste & Financial Assistance Program.

Sustainable materials management: The use and reuse of materials in the most productive and sustainable way across their entire life cycle. Sustainable materials management conserves resources, reduces waste, reduces toxic chemicals, slows climate change, minimizes the environmental impacts of the materials we use throughout the material life cycle, and assures we have sufficient resources to meet today's needs and those of the future.

Sustainability: Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Toxic chemicals: Any substance that may be harmful to the environment or hazardous to human health if inhaled, ingested, or absorbed through the skin.

Underserved: Communities or areas that receive limited solid or hazardous waste services. This often includes rural areas, multifamily housing, small businesses, public spaces, as well as communities of color, low-income populations, and places with other environmental justice considerations.

Vulnerable Populations:

a. Population groups that are more likely to be at higher risk for poor health outcomes in response to environmental harms, due to:

i. Adverse socioeconomic factors, such as unemployment, high housing and transportation costs relative to income, limited access to nutritious food and adequate health care, linguistic isolation, and other factors that negatively affect health outcomes and increase vulnerability to the effects of environmental harms; and

ii. sensitivity factors, such as low birth weight and higher rates of hospitalization.

b. "Vulnerable populations" includes, but is not limited to:

i. Racial or ethnic minorities;

DRAFT

ii. Low-income populations;

iii. Populations disproportionately impacted by environmental harms; and

iv. Populations of workers experiencing environmental harms.

Waste management hierarchy: Priority methods for managing solid and hazardous waste established in chapters chapter 70A.205 RCW[3] (solid waste) and chapter 70A.300 RCW RCW[4] (hazardous waste). While the hierarchy differs slightly between the two laws, both place reducing waste as the highest priority, followed by recycling and safe disposal.

Waste prevention: To reduce the amount of solid waste generated or resources used, without increasing toxicity, in the design, manufacture, purchase, or use of products or packaging. "Pure" waste prevention does not include recycling or composting. Often used similarly to source reduction and waste reduction.

Waste Reduction and Recycling Education Grants (WRRED): Ecology grants that provide funding to local governments and nonprofit organizations for local or statewide education programs about litter control, waste reduction, recycling, and composting.

Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Litter Control Account (WRRLCA): A state account funded by a litter tax that supports vital solid waste management work in Washington, including litter prevention and pickup, recycling, waste reduction, and conserving energy and natural resources.

Waste reduction: Reducing the amount or toxicity of waste generated or reusing materials. Often used similarly to source reduction and waste prevention.

DRAFT