Washington Hospitality Association

October 26, 2026
Department of Ecology
Statewide Recycled List Subcommittee

Dear Members of the Statewide Recycled List Subcommittee,

I wanted to take a moment and thank you for your continued collaboration on the Recycling Reform Act. On behalf of more than 6,000 restaurants, hotels, and small hospitality businesses across the state, the Washington Hospitality Association strongly supports the inclusion of both polycoated paper cups (hot cups) and polypropylene plastic cups (cold cups) on Washington's statewide recyclable materials list — both of which are already compatible with current collection and sorting infrastructure

Similar to the Association's letter in May, we strongly recommend beginning with the broadest possible set of materials supported by existing recycling pathways. Given the current complexity of the recycling system, a more inclusive list will reduce confusion among Washington residents about what is recyclable. Inclusion will help drive down system costs by expanding the pool of participating producers, while also providing clearer, more consistent guidance to consumers.

There is clear and growing end-market demand. More than 35 paper mills in North America—representing the majority of domestic mixed paper capacity—accept polycoated paper cups and recover high-quality fiber for new products. Similarly, polypropylene (PP) cups are processed alongside other rigid #5 plastics, with reclaimers representing the vast majority of U.S. capacity confirming they can and do recycle this material. In Washington, local infrastructure already supports these pathways, including in-state mill capacity and existing acceptance in programs such as Seattle's.

Additionally, real-world programs demonstrate scalability and success. Cities and jurisdictions across the U.S., as well as international EPR programs such as Ontario's, have successfully incorporated these materials into residential recycling systems, with confirmed end markets and improved material recovery.

We urge the Department of Ecology to include both polycoated paper beverage cups and polypropylene plastic beverage cups on Washington's statewide recyclable materials list because doing so will strengthen the state's recycling system, support domestic end markets, advance Washington's broader waste reduction and circular economy goals, and reduce confusion for consumers. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kerry Dolan
State Government Affairs Manager