Methow Recycles (Aspen Kvicala)

This preliminary needs assessment is intended to offer snapshot of what recycling looks like in the various regions of our state. I appreciate that this is a monumental undertaking. There are several points of feedback I'd like to offer where I feel the data is either lacking, misconstrued, or not accurately reflective of recycling in our region.
1) There is a map in the PNA that features 7, soon to be 6, MRFs in the state. This map makes Central Washington look like a complete dead zone when it comes to processing and managing recyclables, which is far from the case. There are many efforts throughout the region, whether spearheaded by non-profits, municipalities, the private sector, or some combination thereof, to take advantage of opportunities to create better recycling solutions and more access for rural communities. There are many MRFs (not collection depots) that operate throughout our region yet these are not reflected on the map. The parameters used to define MRFs in the PNA were not made clear. There is much more capacity to process recycling in the communities in Central Washington than is presented in the PNA.

2) Three MRFs in Okanogan County are a part of a regional circular market for fiber. Techniplex (formerly Keyes Fiber) in Wenatchee buys and hauls fiber from all three facilities to manufacture various paper packaging products. This is a fantastic system that is, in part, supplied and maintained locally. This makes it so that fiber is one of the top commodities that support our operations and yet it is not reflected in the PNA. It is exactly these kinds of arrangements we fear might be inadvertently disrupted by the RRA if it is not adequately understood at this stage.

3) I understand that the RRA does not cover business recycling (this includes recycling collected from hotels and nightly rentals) yet in tourist economies like in the Methow Valley, our capacity to process recycling is far greater than the number of households present in our area. For example, the Town of Winthrop has a year-round population of approximately 800, but has more than 200,000 annual visitors, all of whom generate recyclable materials while visiting. This is why we are concerned with the metric used in the PNA to determine capacity. The actual number of people served, not availability of service, needs to be taken into account in order to truly, accurately understand infrastructure capacity.