

SWAC Advisory Committee Meeting
 June 16, 2023 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
 Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

SWAC Members Present		King County Staff	
Taylor Atkinson, Vice Chair, Citizen Representative		Kelsey Bailey, SWD staff	
April Atwood, Marketing and Education		Lindy Honaker, SWD staff	
Jay Blazey, Manufacturer		Pat McLaughlin, SWD Director	
Robin Freedman, Waste Industry		Amy Ockerlander, SWD staff	
Phillippa Kassover, Local Elected Official		Elka Peterson Horner, King County PSB staff	
Bill Louie, Citizen Representative		Andy Smith, SWD staff	
Brett Lohrman, Labor Representative		Hannah Scholes, SWD staff	
Penny Sweet, Local Elected Official		Adrian Tan, SWD staff	
Leah Tischler, Public Interest Group		Isabelle Trujillo, SWD staff	
Heather Trim, Recycling Industry		Dorian Waller, SWD staff	
Wendy Weiker, Chair, Waste Industry		John Walsh, SWD staff	
Guests			
Jon Gire, City of Bellevue		Kazia Mermel, Sound Cities Association	
Jeanette Jurgensen, Bin There Consulting		Fanny Silverio Gonzalez	
Brad Lovaas, WA Refuse and Recycling Association		Diana Wadley, Dept. of Ecology	

Call to Order and Introductions

After introductions, Chair Weiker called the meeting to order at 9:39 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

Sweet moved to approve the minutes. Trim and Atkinson seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment

Wadley shared several updates and comments beginning with thanking haulers and King County for helping Ecology determine parts across the state that will be impacted by the Organics Management Law. Ecology is tasked with showing where in the state there are areas that have haulers that can pick up organics from businesses by July 1. This would serve any kind of business year-round, including food businesses, and then this material would be taken to an organics management facility that has capacity to take that additional material. Collection of organics from a commercial source is an open market, so Ecology had to search around to find out who the players are. Ecology is very close to posting that determination due July 1.

In the chat, Wadley posted Ecology's Organic Management Folder which is where the determination will be posted. This will also be sent out in their newsletter. Information about the business collection requirements on the Organics Management Law can be [found here](#). For more information about the law in general, check out this [overview](#). More details can be found in [Ecology's Organics Management law library](#). You can subscribe to the [Organics Management newsletters](#) for more information. All previous newsletters can be [found here](#).

Last Month, Ecology received Seattle's Solid Waste Management Plan, and this has now been approved. In Ecology's approval letter, they highlighted where they are looking in their recommendations to continue partnerships with King County in various ways. One of those is recommendation 13, where they are uplifting the Responsible Recycling Task Force. When Ecology approved the plan, they encouraged Seattle to use their role as a leader in the state to increase transparency in recycling. As we know, what gets collected for recycling does not always find its way into becoming a

new product. It needs help along the way and sometimes things go askew. This was underscored recently by an ABC investigative report in other areas of the country (California, Texas, parts of the East Coast) related to plastic bags and recycling across the nation. If you're interested in some of Wadley's notes regarding this and how it relates to some of the websites that promote store material take-back, reach out to Wadley at Diana.Wadley@ecy.wa.gov.

Lastly, the [Washington Materials Management and Financing Authority](#) (WMMFA), the operator of E-Cycle Washington has produced a new 8"x5" information card that is ready for public distribution. This can be ordered for free and contains basic program details for E-Cycle Washington and a QR code that links to the [collection side finder](#). The finder allows users to search by city or ZIP code to find out where they can drop off computers, monitors, television, e-readers, tablets, and portable DVD players for free. To order cards, email info@wmmfa.net or call 855-674-5871. Please request the cards in increments of 50. Most requests are for 100-300 cards. Wadley thanked our partners at the Northwest Product Stewardship Council for getting this information out. If you are interested in commenting to the Northwest Product Stewardship Council, they are accepting comments which they will then pass on to those that do E-Cycle Washington.

SWD Updates

McLaughlin provided the SWD update.

Tonnage Report

As is normally the case, last month we received more tonnage than the May 2022, because of this we are estimated a slight positive difference (0.5%) tonnage for the year. In 2023, we will receive less tonnage compared to 2022.

According to the Office of Economic and Financial Analysis, the economic outlook for King County in 2023 remains positive, with growth in personal income, population, employment and building permits.

C&D Facility and Salvaged Lumber Tour

On June 14, the Division participated in a salvaged lumber and Construction and Demolition (C&D) facility tour in the Seattle area. The facilities toured showcased recycling and salvage processes that capture reusable building materials that can be used in new construction, retrofits or recycled. The Division organized this tour to better understand what happens with construction and demolition waste in our region. The tour included detailed descriptions about what is taking place at each stop along the way, as well as a walkthrough of the actual recycling facilities and warehouses, and discussions with county and facility staff. Facilities toured included: **Sledge** salvaged warehouse in Ballard; **Earthwise** in South Seattle to see some salvaged building materials ready for reuse; **Gypsum recycling facility** in the South Park area; **DTG Hudson**, a King County designated facility accept demolition waste and sort out the banned materials; **WM's** Argo railhead.

We will be looking into revisiting the C&D fees for 2025. Right now, fees are charged per ton and this charge fee was set back in the 90s. We will revisit to make sure that we can support this program with a sustainable basis.

Green Globe Awards

On June 7, eleven individuals and organizations from across King County were honored by Executive Constantine and DNRP with a 2023 Green Globe Award for outstanding work to protect and restore the environment, and contributing to a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable King County. The award show was well attended. One of the awardees was Warren King George of the Muckleshoot Tribe who won the Environmental Legacy Award for providing invaluable perspective over the years on protecting and integrating Tribal cultural legacy, traditional knowledge, and utilizing cultural resources in contemporary project decision-making. We worked very closely with the Muckleshoot Tribe during the South County Recycling and Transfer Station (SCRTS) groundbreaking. Another awardee who we work closely with is Sledge Seattle who won the Leader in Green Building award for rescuing wood and other materials from homes destined to be demolished and thrown away.

Atkinson wanted to know where the Gypsum recycled plant is. McLaughlin responded that it is in Georgetown. Atkinson followed up asking if the plant has measures to keep the dust down. McLaughlin said that this is an enclosed facility and there is a lot of material. Smith added that Public Health – Seattle & King County regulate the facility, and the facility has a covered yard and the machine that is often used is also covered. We can provide more information to Atkinson if wanted.

Trim commented that she can see the [disposal restrictions](#) list at King County solid waste facilities online and wanted to know if there are signs when you enter the transfer station and in the transfer stations that show what things can and can't be disposed of. McLaughlin replied that there are not really any signs because our operators at the transfer stations are the ones who primarily screen for not-allowed items as they come across the scale. Generally, homeowners bringing pick-up trucks are not a big issue, and the screening and enforcement of not-allowed items really takes place on trailer loads or large truck loads. So, this information relies more on transfer station operators and not signage. Trim followed up saying that at the Seattle Transfer Stations, there is not a lot of engagement with customers. This might be an area to think about.

McLaughlin added that we have a team focused on waste cleaning and clearance who also engage with customers and visit transfer stations to hold customers accountable. If someone drops off a non-confirming load and then leaves, they are contacted and sometimes fined. We do a decent job of keeping these materials out of our transfer stations, but there is a need for more processing capacity for these materials and more education to make sure that these materials do not end up in the landfill.

MSWAC Update

No update.

2023 Legislative Review

Scholes and Tan provided this review.

As an overview, the bills that passed this 2023 Legislative Session are:

- **SB 5144 Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Batteries.** This is our big win of the year. This will make a huge difference in safety and environmental stewardship for batteries.
- **HB 1033 Work Group on Compostable Products.** This will hopefully move us towards less contamination in our compost and lead to good conversations on how this system works in our state.
- **HB 1085 Plastic Pollution Reduction.** This is the bill that would phase out mini toiletries at hotels, require refill stations wherever drinking fountains are required in new buildings, and ban foam-filled docks and floats.
- **SB 5287 Study on the recycling of wind turbine blades.** This will hopefully set us up for the future with recommendations for the future.
- **SB 5187/HB 1140 budget provision,** which includes: recycling, reuse, and source reduction targets study; and community engagement about the state's recycling system and what people would like to see in the future. Ecology will manage both studies.

The bills that did not advance are:

- **HB 1131/SB 5154 Washington Recycling and Packaging Act (WRAP).** The deposit return system is the main thing that resulted in the bill not advancing.
- **HB 1132/SB 5464 Right to Repair.** This made good progress and Minnesota has recently passed a Right to Repair bill.
- **HB 1164 EPR for appliances containing refrigerants**
- **HB 1185 Mercury-containing lights & EPR for lighting products.** We have an EPR program for this and this bill would ensure this work could continue and it included all lights.
- **HB 1264 Encouraging equitable solid waste collection rates.** This would compare single family with multi-family.

- **HB 1422 Exempting certain reusable packing materials from sales and use tax**
- **SB 5376 Allowing the sale of cannabis waste.** Currently, you must mix your cannabis waste with similar material like litter. We don't want more organics going to the landfill so a bill like this would help get organics out.
- **SB 5484 technical assistance to farmers and food processors in support of improved voluntary environmental stewardship**

We have been having internal meetings to go over our reflections for the 2023 Legislative Session. Scholes stated that we are very excited that the EPR for batteries has passed. We will be doing a lot of work around the WRAP ACT not passing but we did make progress and there is continued strong engagement. In the 2022 Legislative Session, we had the Renew Act which did not include the deposit system and we are making baby steps towards a bill like the WRAP Act. This year, we focused more on the House side instead of the Senate side and a lot of education occurred. This is setting us up well for next year because it has been well socialized on both sides of the legislature. The WRAP Act was a BIG bill that included EPR, a bottle bill, and recycled content requirements. This made things complicated and brought a lot of opposition. Legislators are considering this aspect for the future. In the interim, we expect that Rep. Berry will continue to engage with interested parties and affected groups.

Senator Rolfes will no longer be in that seat so there will be change in Senate leadership. We will have to see who fills in that role for a bill like the WRAP Act. There is a lot of groundwork that needs to be done and we need to engage more with interested parties.

The potential bills for 2024 are:

- **EPR for Paper and Packaging (WRAP Act).** Rep. Berry confirmed that the WRAP Act will in some way be in the 2024 Legislative Session. We are unsure what this will exactly look like.
- **Organics.** We are expecting to see something about the Organics Management Law that did get passed. There are some things that did not get passed and there is a stakeholder group being convened for that starting next month.
- **Right to Repair.**
- **Mercury-containing lights and EPR for lighting (HB 1185)**
- **EPR for appliances containing refrigerants (HB 1164)**
- **Wind Turbine Blade Recycling.** We expect there might be a follow up on the wind turbine depending on the results of the study.
- **EV Battery Recycling.** Part of the Battery Bill that was passed included a requirement that Ecology completes a study for Electric Vehicle (EV) battery recycling.

We appreciate any feedback on how committee members felt informed during the legislative session. If you'd like to be involved with any bills, we can help you get connected.

Kassover said that it is valuable for everyone to participate in the process, including testifying at the legislature. She encouraged fellow SWAC members to testify so that legislatures understand that this is coming from the people as well and not just the industry.

Sweet added that we want to keep getting this information.

Cedar Grove debrief

Bailey presented this debrief.

Over the month of May, Cedar Grove partnered with the County to host three tours on May 10, 17 and 31. Amongst the three dates, there were almost 25 attendees. There was a good mix of committee members and County employees. An overview of how each morning tour went:

- Safety standards & aerial walkthrough
- Weigh station

- Tipping building
- Negative air piles, aerated piles
- Screening at the “Kraken”
- Final screening for final product
- Compost mix site
- Bagging & sales
- Stormwater ponds

At the tipping building, attendees saw where materials are first dropped when haulers are cleared at the weigh station. As Cedar Grove accepts municipal yard and food waste, contamination is a known struggle. What is not captured in the photos are large items like watering cans, green bins, hoses, and other products that are first pulled by tipping monitors. Cedar Grove then goes through other obvious pieces of garbage like black & white garbage bags, chip containers, dog toys, glass, and other obvious items. These tours are important for people to have that visual trigger to see how each individual action as residents impacts what ends up at the stations.

Skipping ahead through the process quickly, Bailey wanted to show a comparison of the end product. As there are many concerns around plastics and contamination, this was an extreme difference compared to what had come into their facility. Small plastics, fruit stickers, and other film items still make it through the process, so it is certainly not perfect – but the image shows the difference in what comes in and what comes out at the end. Cedar Grove has about a 5% visual contamination inspection amount. If it’s more, they will reject it. A lot of these plastic items that get through end up weighing and fitting as organic shapes so it’s hard for the machine to differentiate.

To remove that contamination and plastic, Cedar Grove utilizes an Action Screening System (what they call the “Kraken”) that has 22 suction points that removes plastics along multiple conveyer belts. The machine turns out three different products for three different uses– a two-inch product that is utilized for balancing the Carbon Nitrogen ratio when other organics come in, a one-inch product that is used for coverage for the curing of compost piles, and then the finer finished product that was shown on the previous slide. Plastics and contaminants screened there go into that trailer, which is then brought over to Cedar Hills Landfill.

Along the tour, they also were shown the area that houses and mixes all the varied products, which can include mixing in different ratios of sand and other materials to help with holding or filtering more water, etc.

The far-right image shows the final of their three-stormwater pond system that collects and filters the water collected from the property before feeding into the sewer system. They have installed curtains, like that of areas in the Southeast experiencing hurricanes, to keep any additional debris and blown plastic from mixing in. The bottom image shows the bagging plant in the back and pallets of bagged products that are sold to retailers all over.

As Cedar Grove is one of the main compost processing facilities in the region, Bailey felt it was important to offer opportunities for Project Managers to visit their main facility and continue conversations with them as we begin to implement the requirements of the Organics Management Law. There are likely more bills like this to come down the line and it’s important that as we have these concerns, we can have that first-hand experience to talk about that.

We know this is a big piece of legislation that is requiring a lot of jurisdictions and partners in the organics and waste sector, so hopefully building this bridge was informational and useful for your future work.

As the Organics Circular Economy Project Manager at King County SWD, Bailey is here to lead in education, outreach, prevention, and compost procurement. Resources and opportunities for more information will be sent out to members via Waller. This includes more detailed information on how cities may access our universal contract with Cedar Grove, which has been a question in past meetings. We have the Washington Organics Recycling Council (WORC)/Tilth Conference in October at Fort Warden. This conference is an annual event bringing together hundreds of farms, food system professionals, composters, researchers, and educators for more than 25 lectures, workshops and panel discussions that

highlight Washington's farmers and farm business. To contact Bailey for compost topics, email her at compost@kingcounty.gov. Her direct email is kebailey@kingcounty.gov. If interested in setting up or joining another Cedar Grove tour, you can directly email karen Dawson at karend@cgcompost.com.

Atkinson commented that she was on the tour and noticed the positive way used Gore-Tex, and wanted to know if we were worried about PFAS and what will happen when the covers are retired. Blazey replied that Gore-Tex knows about this issue and believes that they will have a PFAS-free cover soon. They are testing material in Germany and have not found that leaking is an issue, but this is something that is being studied and addressed.

Atwood wanted to know what the interaction is between the compost industry and the producers of problem issues, like fruit stickers, instead of putting the blame on customers. Blazey replied that the supply chain for stickers is vast and made up of big companies, and many people do not care about this as an issue. There are some companies abroad that make a compostable sticker, but they are more expensive. So, the two barriers right now are cost and indifference. Cedar Grove has tried to address this, but it is harder for a "smaller" company like Cedar Grove compared to that of the global agricultural industry. Another thing that Cedar Grove has done to address plastics is field testing compostable products and making them easily identifiable for residents and facility operators. This is a goal for Cedar Grove. It is very hard to keep up with industries that are constantly producing different products. Every day, there is a new "compostable" item, but we don't know if they break down at a compost facility. This is work that Cedar Grove does by testing all the products that they accept at their facility.

If Atwood would like to talk further about this, please reach out to Blazey to set up a time. This is a complex issue, and it is hard to gain traction when you are approaching it from a regional place like Cedar Grove, especially when the packing companies are big and powerful. Cedar Grove is part of a group called, "Compost Manufacturing Alliance," which is a group of many large composters across the country that are trying to make sure that compost facilities are at the table with these types of discussions and for the issues that are present, like with stickers. Atwood commented that this underscores the importance of having statewide rules because it really helps. This makes it statewide rather than based on smaller, local, or regional entities. Blazey followed up stating that this was part of a law that passed this year and there is going to be a stakeholder group talking about this very issue. Atwood added that it is a good thing that there is a lot of current emphasis and attention being paid to plastics and the different problems caused by plastics. Right now, this is part of a bigger area of concern that companies are paying attention to because they are being forced to.

Trim commented that the topic of non-plastic vegetable stickers is going to be discussed in the organics bill for 2024. Trim agreed with Blazey that this needs to be bigger than one company.

Weiker added in the chat that she has been on the Cedar Grove tour in Maple Valley and Everett, and highly recommends joining one if possible. It is helpful to see how organics processing works and end products to the right market.

RE+ Update

Ockerlander gave this update.

As of today, we have presented/scheduled to present to 31 cities in King County. We had two cities that decided to skip the presentation and approve the pledge – Kirkland and Bellevue. We didn't meet the goal of getting to all cities by June, but we are close.

We are up to 20 cities that have approved the Re+ pledge. It's nice to see that cities are engaged in this Re+ work and more than 54% of KC Inter Local Agreement (ILA) cities have approved the pledge in nine months.

As a reminder, last year's Re+ Circular Economy had \$2 million available for this competitive grant program which was open to private, non-profit, and public entities to support waste prevention and waste diversion. We received 48 applications and funded 14 projects in 2022. The planning for the second cycle is underway and is set to take place in Q1 2024.

The Re+ City Grant applications just closed. There was \$300,000 available in this competitive grant program for cities that have signed the Re+ Pledge. There was a successful application period and we strongly encouraged joint city proposals. Our team is currently evaluating proposals with awards to be announced this summer.

We are rescheduling our upcoming meeting with the City of Auburn and will be getting out to the City of Skykomish soon. There are still six cities that remain to be scheduled.

On June 14, Ockerlander and McLaughlin presented a Re+ implementation update to the King County Regional Policy Committee, per Chair von Reichbauer's request.

Rate Restructure Check-in

Waller led this section.

Freedman said that Waste Management cities are receiving the amendments and are taking them to council. Nothing new to report.

Weiker stated that the rate restructure is going well and is on schedule with all Republic Services cities.

Kassover said that they've received the information and staff are working on it.

Member Comment

Trim commented that she was not able to make the tour and was wondering if there could be an accommodation transfer station/landfill tour this summer. Waller said he would work on it. Trim added that the organics stakeholder process will start in July with the first meeting on July 5, from 12-2. The second meeting will be July 18, from 12-2. Most of these Zoom meetings will take place on the first and third Wednesday of each month through January, except for a couple Tuesday's because the facilitator has some conflicts. There will be a link once the facilitation gets going and an invite will be sent out soon. Anyone who is interested in invited to participate. It will be open this year because it was not a problem last time.

Trim asked for an update from Waste Management on who is participating because the previous person retired. The point of the bill is to tee up with California's 1383 which is mandated compost. There are more topics that are related, including plastics, but the number one goal is to tee up with California's mandated procurement and mandated composting.

Kassover asked if these are the organics stakeholder meetings. Trim responded that is correct and is for the big bill that will be introduced in 2024. HB 1799 was part one of the bill, and part two will come in 2024. Ideally, all the cities would have

mandated compost for all their residents. Kassover said that Lake Forest Park is already on board. Trim added that this will also include climate change plans.

Trim wanted to know if Wadley's updates could be a standing item on the agenda and not just through public comment. In other SWAC's that Trim has attended, Ecology's updates are a standing item. Kassover agreed with Trim's comments and did not understand why Ecology's updates were in the public comment section rather than having their own agenda spot.

Atkinson asked Waller if this is something the committee votes on. Sweet chimed in wondering if this would change the charter. Waller stated that this does not change the charter because it is just adding an item. The committee can add any standing items to the agenda that they want. Sweet wanted to know if the committee can add members. Waller replied that they can, but state agencies do not follow under the absolute charter themselves.

Weiker asked in chat what the bylaws are for SWAC membership or agenda.

McLaughlin stated that as a member of this committee, there are specific appointments via the King County Council. He does not believe that we could add a member of Ecology as a committee member unless they fill one of the specific roles that we were recruiting for, but you can determine what is on the agenda. Trim clarified that she was not asking for Ecology to have a seat on SWAC but rather just having a standing item on the agenda. Atkinson added that this can be talked about on their upcoming agenda planning meeting.

Wadley stated that she is willing to be a standing agenda item if members would like as other Ecology colleagues do for their respective SWAC's. Instead of making Ecology folks full on members at other various SWAC's, they assign them ex-officio membership. This makes them a non-voting member, but they still get all the emails and documents that other members get to review.

Trim made a motion to make Ecology's slot as an ex-officio slot and their update as a standing item on the agenda. Kassover seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Waller added that he is not sure if this SWAC can add an ex-officio slot, but he will check and get back to Atkinson.

McLaughlin suggested that for the sake of clarity, the committee just motions for the standing agenda item since we do not know for sure if we can add the ex-officio slot. Waller can come back and share with the committee what other options there are. Trim amended her previous motion and recommended this ex-officio slot be considered by the Executive's Office and that Ecology's update be a standing item on the agenda. Kassover seconded this motion. Motion passed unanimously. McLaughlin added that we can take this forward for the Executive Office to come and report back on what can be done around the ex-officio slot.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 10:47 a.m.