

# King County Solid Waste Advisory Committee

June 17, 2011 - 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.  
King Street Center 8<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room  
Next SWAC meeting – July 15, 2011 - 9:30-11:30

## Meeting Minutes

<u>Members</u>
David Baker
Jerry Bartlett
William A. Beck
Steve Gerritson
Jerry Hardebeck
Matthew House
Joan McGilton
Suellen Mele
Philipp Schmidt-Pathmann
Relaena Sindelar
Judy Stenberg
John Taylor
Bill Ziegler

<u>Others</u>
Gemma Alexander, SWD Staff
Lauren Cole, SWD Staff
Jeff Gaisford, SWD Recycling and Environmental Services Manager
Kathy Hashagen, SWD Staff
Anne Holmes, SWD Staff
Preston Horne-Brine, IMC
Kevin Kiernan, SWD Director
Victor Okereke, SWD Engineering Services Manager
Grace Reamer, King County Council Staff
Lisa Sepanski, SWD Staff
Thea Severn, SWD Staff
Tom Watson, SWD Staff
Diane Yates, SWD Intergovernmental Liaison

### Approve May Meeting Minutes; Review Agenda

Mele asked that “landfill gas to energy” be changed to “landfilling” in the part of the Open Forum section of the May minutes that reflects her comments. The revised notes would read “Currently, landfilling and incineration for energy are at the same level in the state’s solid waste management hierarchy per RCW 70.95.”

After discussion, SWAC chose to hold approval of the May minutes in abeyance until the next SWAC meeting, September 16.

### Updates

#### SWD

The comp plan process continues. The Washington State Department of Ecology continues to review the plan. The SEPA is out and the comment period has begun. More information is available at (<http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/about/planning/comp-plan.asp>)

King County Council’s Budget and Financial Management Committee had the first reading of the solid waste rate proposal June 7. The topic will be discussed further at the June 21 Budget and Financial Management Committee meeting.

The screen walls at the Houghton Transfer Station screen wall have been installed. The screen wall on the south side of the transfer building keeps litter inside the building and enhances the appearance of the transfer station. The wall is made from recyclable materials and will depict a scene that mirrors the park across the street. The screen wall cost a fraction of the price a masonry or concrete wall.

May’s tonnage was a little higher than tonnage received during the same time period in 2010. June tonnage information is more mixed.

Recycling and Environmental Services Supervisor Bill Reed was inducted into the Washington State Recycling Association's Hall of Fame in May. The Hall of Fame recognizes and honors individuals who have made long-term contributions to recycling in the state of Washington.

At the same meeting, Recycling and Environmental Services Program Manager Donna Miscolta received the Washington State Recycling Association 2011 K-12 Youth Education Recycler of the Year Award for her work on the division's elementary school assembly program.

The division's Asphalt Shingle Paving Project won a Best in Category Award from the National Association of Counties. The award will be presented in Portland next month.

Kiernan provided a solid waste briefing to the Federal Way City Council on June 7 and to Mercer Island on June 14. A further presentation is scheduled for Redmond (July 12).

The Solid Waste Division Annual Report was available at the meeting. The report is also available online at:

[http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/about/documents/SWD\\_annual\\_report-2010.pdf](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/about/documents/SWD_annual_report-2010.pdf)

#### MSWMAC

MSWMAC continues their discussions about the "term sheet" that delineates conceptual agreements for the ILA. The term sheet will be brought to future MSWMAC meetings for discussion. When conceptual agreement has been reached, a smaller group will meet to draft ILA language. In response to a question Kiernan noted that at this point the term sheet is very fluid and is not ready for a wider distribution.

#### Other

County email addresses will be available soon. Your email address will be SWAC(position number)@KingCounty.gov. SWAC notifications will be sent to that address.

SWAC members are asked to write any changes in their contact information on the sign-in sheet.

#### **EcoConsumer Program**

The EcoConsumer program promotes environmental messages for the county and the division through consumer outreach. Tom Watson, the program manager, presented information about the program.

EcoConsumer was initially focused waste prevention but has evolved to discuss a broad range of topics. It raises awareness about the possible impact of consumer choices. The program identifies the issue and where to go for further information but seldom takes a definitive stand. Examples of EcoConsumer topics include:

- Disposable hand towels for home use are being promoted by manufacturers as a more sanitary choice. EcoConsumer provides information about the waste the towels would create and the need to balance the perceived benefit of additional sanitation with possible environmental impacts.
- Not all biodegradable disposable cutlery is compostable. EcoConsumer provides education about the cost/benefits of biodegradable cutlery and how it can be composted or disposed.

- The “recycling arrows” at the bottom of containers don’t mean that plastic can necessarily be recycled in all communities. EcoConsumer explains why the confusion exists and how to find information for your area.
- What do you do with pet waste? EcoConsumer identifies options.
- Product stewardship programs – EcoConsumer provides education about the costs and benefits of various product stewardship programs.

EcoConsumer began in 2005. Initially, the program began with the Seattle Times column and paid TV ads. Over time the program has moved away from paid ads and more toward unpaid new coverage and social media.

- 19.1 million audience impressions in 2010, including 26 TV appearances, 81 radio interviews, 26 Seattle Times columns and 34 presentations to groups.
- The program makes use of social media including Twitter, Facebook, and the EcoConsumer blog at <http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/ecoconsumer/blog.asp?ID=90>

Comments included:

- Has there been a comparative life cycle analysis between cloth towels and paper towels? Determining the best choice can be complicated when you consider the impacts of laundering the towels, transportation costs and other impacts.
- Cedar Grove is working on a pilot program to accept separated restroom paper towels from controlled office environments for composting.
- Consider reclaiming the energy from the production of bio-plastics instead of recycling.
- Only some biodegradable cutlery is compostable. Go to the Cedar Grove website for more information. Consider a presentation on what is and isn’t compostable.
- A member suggested that Watson spend some time at a MRF to determine the most problematic materials.
- Consider accessing the hauler’s billing systems to get city specific educational information to the public.
- This is a model for how to provide the public with information. Topics are a good combination of practical tips and big picture thinking.
- In response to a question, Gaisford said King County has an environmentally preferred purchasing program.
- Kiernan commented that the materials accepted as recyclable varies between cities. This is both valuable because it keeps recycling moving forward and difficult because it makes overall messaging challenging.

For more information about the program, visit the website at <http://www.KCecoconsumer.com> or <http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/ecoconsumer> If you have questions, contact Watson at 206-296-4481 or [Tom.Watson@KingCounty.gov](mailto:Tom.Watson@KingCounty.gov)

### **Closed Landfill Update**

SWD Staff Anne Holmes presented information about SWD actions regarding closed landfills for which the division has responsibility. The purpose of those actions is to progressively enhance closed landfill management and minimize the risk to the environment and human health while ensuring regulatory compliance. A copy of her presentation is available here [King County Solid Waste Closed Landfills](#) presentation.

Each closed landfill is regulated by the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) that was in place when the landfill closed. Because the oldest landfill closed in 1967 and the most recent closure was in 2001, the division manages closed landfills under three different sets of regulations.

Managing closed landfills includes various methods of monitoring and managing leachate, landfill gas, landfill covers and surface and ground water. In addition the division partners with others, allowing the properties to be used for softball fields, walking and bike trails, model airplane flights, carbon sequestration pilot projects and more.

For some of these closed landfills, the twenty to thirty year post closure period is ending. However, when the legislation to monitor the landfills was written, it did not include a method to allow post closure monitoring to be reduced even if the landfill has been shown to be stable. The Washington State Department of Ecology is attempting to create guidance for ending post closure. Future challenges include creating a way to define an end point so resources can be redirected to other activities.

Also, after fifteen to twenty years, activity at landfills diminishes significantly. Regulations do not allow monitoring activities to diminish in the same way. Another challenge is to look for opportunities to tailor monitoring activities to the activity level of each facility in a way that manages the facility, minimizes risk and leverages scarce resources.

In response to questions Kiernan said that shallow rooted trees can be grown on top of closed landfills with geomembrane covers.

Holmes noted that there are many closed or abandoned landfills within the state. Some are being dealt with by other utilities.

### **Product Stewardship Legislation**

SWAC received a presentation from Lisa Sepanski, SWD Staff on product stewardship legislation. A copy of the handout is available [here](#). 2011 was the first year of the legislative biennium. Bills that did not pass at the end of session in the first year of the biennium are typically returned to the house of origin to the last committee and are “reintroduced and retained in present status.” They will be eligible for further legislative action in the upcoming second year of the biennium. Bills that don’t get passed at the end of session in the second year of the biennium are “dead” and will get no further consideration.

Product stewardship bills that are anticipated to return during the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the biennium include:

- Unwanted Medicines (SSB 5234 and the companion bill HB1370). For more information go to [www.takebackyourmeds.org](http://www.takebackyourmeds.org)
- Carpet (SSB 5110) Senator Kohl-Welles is gathering comments on this bill.
- Electronics (SSB 5824) Adds products to those that will be accepted by E-cycle Washington and converts the funding mechanism from a “return” share to a “market” share.
- Phone Books (HB 1751) A similar bill may be introduced next session that has been revised in response to the City of Seattle’s experience with a similar program that allows residents to “opt out” of receiving phone books at their homes.

- Sharps (SHB 1496 and its companion bill SB 5632) Sharps in the waste stream have posed a significant safety issue for workers.

In respond to a question Sepanski said that there has been a change in Federal Law expanding the types of entities to which controlled substances may be returned. The rule making on that law is in process. In the meantime, Group Health and Bartells continue to collect unwanted medicines (excluding controlled substances) at some locations. A list of the locations can be found at <http://www.takebackyourmeds.org/what-you-can-do/locations>

### **Open Forum**

In response to a question, Kiernan said he would ask Pierce County Solid Waste Leadership about the possibility of a joint meeting with SWAC.

Schmidt-Pathmann reported that some sources are saying that Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFL) are not considered as energy efficient as previously reported; do not produce as much light as expected; and the circuit boards cannot be recycled. CFLs contain more mercury than initially reported. Because the CFLs break easily, there is a greater risk of exposure to people collecting them for recycling and to landfill workers when they are not recycled. SWAC could choose to add a CFL action item that pushes toward LED lighting.

Schmidt-Pathmann discussed the growing contamination in curbside recyclables in the City of Seattle, saying contamination rates have tripled. The mind set has shifted to more materials can be recycled than disposed but additional education is needed.

It is difficult to measure the percentage of unwanted medications that have been kept out of the waste stream and the effect of this diversion. How much is collected in the pilot programs is clear but how much is used is less clear.

Schmidt-Pathmann discussed a local effort from an organization called Climate Solutions that are looking into sustainable aviation fuels. Their research has shown that using municipal solid waste as well as wood for fuels does not discourage growth in recycling.

Schmidt-Pathmann said that Germany and Italy are moving away from nuclear power and are instead looking into every type of renewable energy. WTE is a very important component of that work. In addition, the city of Los Angeles has been looking at disposal technologies. After reviewing 25 options, they chose three – all of which are mass burn with up front sorting. These options were chosen because of their high diversion rates. The final vendor will be selected this week. The facility has not been sited.