



SOLID WASTE CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

August 2, 2012

Councilmember Jean Godden
Chair, Libraries, Utilities, Center Committee
PO Box 34025
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

Dear Councilmember Godden and Committee members,

The Solid Waste Advisory Committee members appreciate the opportunity to review and discuss SPU's proposed 2013-14 rate proposal. The committee discussed specific Budget Issue Papers (BIP) and would like to bring the following topics to Committee for consideration (listed in order of importance):

1. SWF – Waste Reduction and Recycling Program Reductions (BIP #103)
 - a. **Reduce residential food waste compost collection promotion by 50%.** Residential food waste diversion is critical to Seattle's ability to reach recycling/diversion goals as specified in the City's Comprehensive Solid Waste Plan. As demonstrated year after year, public outreach efforts are critical to increasing diversion of compostable material such as food waste and compostable food service ware. Since food waste composting is still a relatively new habit, it is critical to continue to provide outreach and education geared toward helping residents make composting a part of their daily routine. We urge the Committee to consider a more moderate cut to the residential food waste promotion budget.
 - b. **Reduce Resource Venture solid waste support for commercial customers by 50%.** The Resource Venture program is the City's only business recycling assistance program. Dedicating and preserving resources for increasing diversion among Seattle businesses has demonstrated an impressive return on investment. The tons diverted in the commercial sector significantly impact to the City's overall recycling rate.
 - c. **Eliminate promotion of yellow pages and junk mail opt out (retains \$160K for the opt-out system payment).** Seattle's trailblazing efforts to bring forth a yellow page opt out program has demonstrated this City's dedication and drive to eliminate waste before it's even created. While still a very new program, SWAC believes it is important for SPU to retain some funding for the continued promotion of the yellow page and junk mail opt out programs. We recommend that a reduced budget for promotion be prioritized with special focus given to areas or demographics of the City with the lowest opt out rates.
 - d. **Eliminate promotion of WA Green Schools (non-profit).** Washington Green Schools is a holistic environmental certification program developed specifically for schools, covering energy, healthy school buildings, transportation, waste and recycling and water. SPU staff has been key to the development of the Washington Green Schools program and has partnered with the Seattle School District and numerous

private schools, of which over 50 schools are active participants. Continuing to fund and support Washington Green Schools is important to Seattle's long-term commitment to making environmental education opportunities available to Seattle's youth and important to developing the next generation of leaders and pioneers.

The SWAC is concerned that reducing funding to these important programs will impact the City's ability to meet its 60% recycling goal by 2015. The SWAC understands that all discretionary spending, which includes the aforementioned waste reduction and recycling efforts, must be closely evaluated for both effectiveness and ratepayers willingness and ability to pay.

We thank you for considering our comments and look forward to providing additional comments and feedback upon your request.

Sincerely,

Julie Pond
SWAC Chair

Cc: Ray Hoffman; Sheryl Shapiro, SPU Community Advisory Committees