

SEATTLE SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE



February 7, 2013

Dear Rep. Steve Tharinger:

I am writing to express City of Seattle Solid Waste Advisory Committee's (SWAC) support for HB 1364 / SB 5457, which will ensure that Washington has an effective, convenient, environmentally sound and fairly financed recycling program for small rechargeable batteries. This bill is good for consumers, public health, the environment, local governments, retailers and other businesses.

Local governments, and environmental advocates, as well as the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation, which operates the Call2Recycle program on behalf of most of Washington's small rechargeable battery manufacturers and marketers, support this legislation. Call2Recycle is currently a voluntary program created by manufacturers to ensure that their rechargeable batteries are responsibly recycled. These companies financially support the Call2Recycle program, providing more than 480 collection locations in Washington for recycling of rechargeable batteries at no extra charge to consumers. Many local government recycling programs across the state also rely on Call2Recycle to properly recycle rechargeable batteries.

However, the current system is in jeopardy because many new rechargeable battery manufacturers are not financially participating in the program. Almost 40% of the rechargeable batteries currently collected in Washington are from companies that don't help fund the recycling program. HB 1364 / SB 5457 formalizes proper end-of-life disposal of rechargeable batteries and includes enforcement provisions to ensure that all battery manufacturers participate.

Proper recycling of rechargeable batteries is important to protect public health and our environment. Rechargeable batteries contain toxic heavy metals such as cadmium and lead that can harm human health and the environment when improperly managed. Exposure to these materials can cause cancer and reproductive disorders, as well as kidney, liver and neurological dysfunctions.

Seattle is one of 54 local jurisdictions in Washington that partners with Call2Recycle. Call2Recycle provides collection kits, marketing materials and covers the costs of transporting and processing batteries, saving Washington's local governments over \$25,000 in recycling costs annually. In addition, Call2Recycle provides convenient battery drop-off sites at many retail stores in our communities. Easy access to battery drop-off sites increases customer participation and boosts recycling rates.

The Seattle SWAC respectfully urges you to support HB 1364 / SB 5457 to maintain a successful, convenient and safe return program for rechargeable batteries for the benefit and protection of Washington's residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JBR', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Joseph Ringold, Co-Chair
City of Seattle Solid Waste Advisory Committee