



SPU Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)

January 4, 2023 Meeting Notes
Webex
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

*Chair: Brie Kuhn
Co-Chair: Wendy Weiker
Secretary: Michael Johnson*

Committee Members	Present?	SPU Staff /Guest	Role
Danny Barksdale	Y	Quinn Apuzzo	SPU – SWAC Program Coordinator
Rina Fa’amoe-Cross	Y	McKenna Morigan	SPU – Strategic Advisor, Waste Prevention & Product Stewardship
Brie Kuhn	Y	Jeff Fowler	SPU – Solid Waste Deputy Director
Hannah Scholes	Y	Caroline Bowie	Guest – Department of Ecology
Adrian Tan	Y	Heather Trim	Guest – Zero Waste Washington
Ming-Ming Tung Edelman	Y		
Michael Johnson	N		
Chelsey Evans	N		
John Martin	Y		
Erin Gagnon	Y		
Wendy Weiker	Y		
Steven Walls	Y		
Yongkang (YK) Zhou	Y		

1. Welcome & Introductions

- SWAC Chair, Brie, called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm.
- Members and guests introduced themselves. Prompted by the SWAC Chair, they each shared their name, affiliation, and their New Year’s intentions.
- December meeting minutes were approved by SWAC members in attendance.

2. Comments on Solid Waste Line of Business (SWLOB) Updates for SWAC

Updates were provided to the committee in writing in advance of the meeting and shared on the screen during this time. Jeff Fowler was present to answer SWAC’s questions.

- **A SWAC Member asked:** For the deconstruction incentive pilot, how many applications have been received so far? And how is this being shared with the public or people specifically in this field?
- **A SPU Member replied:** We will follow up with that information.
- **A SWAC Member asked:** Do you have stats on social media engagement for the EPR social media campaign? I thought that was really well done.
- **A SPU Staff Member replied:** We will follow up with that information.

3. Comprehensive Plan Update

Quinn provided an update on the 2022 Plan Update adoption and SWAC's role in the next step of the process. Staff is currently navigating the 2022 Plan Update through Council's policy process and working toward an adoption date of February 21, 2023. Per RCW.70.95.167(3) SWAC is responsible for meeting and reviewing the waste reduction and recycling element of the final 2022 Plan Update after adoption by City Council and before Ecology final approval. Since 2018, SWAC's involvement in the 2022 Plan Update has included over 30 presentations, updates, discussions, and feedback opportunities with staff and consultants. Since SWAC last reviewed the Plan Update in January 2022 there have been no substantive changes to the waste reduction and recycling elements of the Plan Update. Staff has requested that SWAC choose to consider the January 4 Meeting review and approval of the Plan Update as meeting this requirement, provided there are no substantive changes to the waste reduction and recycling element of the final 2022 Plan Update by City Council.

A SWAC member asked: What happens if legislation, for example the WRAP Act, is passed that impacts the 2022 Plan Update?

An Ecology Representative responded: They would need to confirm with the point person at Ecology.

A SWAC Member commented: A helpful way that it has been explained to me is that Comp Plan's provide [local government] with a mandate to work on the issues contained within. If something is excluded that later on becomes relevant, it can be more difficult for work to happen on something that is outside of the Comp Plan's scope. So the question is – is there something that is missing from the Comp Plan that would prevent [SPU] from doing its work, or could allow it to do more?

A SWAC Member commented: To add, the Comp Plan is a policy planning document. Programmatic execution happens further down the line so there are lots of things like circular economy that will be discussed and determined later on. At this point, I'm confident in the work that had gone into the Plan Update, that all relevant concepts are included, and am comfortable moving forward with the Comp Plan understanding that the legislature is considering a bill that could have some impact on this work in the future.

Co-Chair Wendy made the Motion that today's meeting fulfills SWAC's duty under RCW 70.95.167(3), and an additional meeting to review the waste reduction and recycling element will not be required provided there are no substantive changes to these sections by City Council during their review of the final 2022 Plan Update. Stephanie Schwenger will advise the SWAC via email within one week after City Council's adoption as to whether or not any substantive Plan language changed from the final 2022 Plan Update version.

Chair Brie seconded the Motion. Approval of the Motion carried in favor 9-0.

4. 2023 Work Plan

Quinn shared the results from SWAC's ranking of priority topics for the 2023 Work Plan and feedback from the recent post-meeting survey. In response to SWAC's feedback, the 2023 Work

Plan will include an emphasis on equity and access across all topics, waste prevention, and SPU's strategic planning process. SWAC will continue to meet virtually most of the time and work toward offering a hybrid meeting option by mid-year. SWAC members are excited about the opportunity to connect periodically in person and will plan on hosting at least two field trips/networking events per year. SWAC presenters will be asked to come prepared with a specific ask or goal for SWAC and meeting agendas will include more time for group discussion. SWAC was asked to complete a poll during the meeting to gather information about an upcoming spring field trip. SWAC members were asked to share ideas for other potential facilities to tour:

- Glass recycling
- Food recovery
- Waste prevention
- Construction recycling
- Bulk retailers
- Organics processing

5. Around the Table

- **A SWAC Member shared:** DTG recently purchased United Recycling and has other acquisitions in progress.
- **A SWAC Member shared:** Waste Experts recently launched a new mobile sorting program at Lumen Field.
- **A SWAC Member shared:** An update on the American Chemistry Council's [2022 Greater Seattle Plastic Film Recycling Circularity Pilot Report](#).
- **A SWAC Member shared:** The [2023 Solid Waste Association of North America \(SWANA\) Northwest Regional Symposium](#) will be on April 18-20, 2023 at the Tulalip Resort. [Student scholarships/mentor opportunities](#) are available.
- **A SWAC Member shared:** The [Washington State Recycling Association \(WSRA\) is hosting their annual conference May 21-24, 2023](#) at the Yakima Convention Center.
- **A SWAC Member shared:** [Circularity 2023 Conference](#) will be in Seattle June 5-7, 2023.
- **A SWAC Member shared:** [American Beverage Association's Every-Bottle- Back](#) website.

6. 2023 Legislative Preview

McKenna Murrigan provided a preview of SPU's legislative agenda for the upcoming session, shared background on how the agenda is developed, and described how SPU engages in the legislative process. The SWLOB's priorities for the upcoming session include: Washington Recycling & Packing Act (WRAP), Extended Producer Responsibility for Batteries and Right to Repair for digital electronic products.

- **A SWAC Member asked:** I grew up with a bottle deposit return system, similar to the one in Oregon, and was curious what other SWAC members thought about it?
- **A SPU Staff Member commented:** Bottle bills were one of the first types of recycling legislation to be put in place over 50 years ago and are in place in a number of states. They were designed to be a solution to litter and disposal waste, at a time when this was an

emerging issue. The basic concept is that consumers pay a deposit at the point of sale and the deposit is redeemed when the consumer returns the bottles to a redemption center.

- Bottle bills have been shown to be very effective at recovering containers from the waste stream, and there are examples in Europe and Canada of this type of policy helping support refill/reuse systems and infrastructure investment.
- **A SWAC Member asked:** Which states have Bottle bills?
- **A SPU Staff Member responded:** California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Oregon, and Vermont.
- **A SWAC Member asked:** Why has it taken so long for Washington to get on board?
- **A SPU Staff Member responded:** There have been a number of attempts to get a deposit program in place in Washington. Environmental and recycling advocates have been working toward this for years, but the beverage industry has long opposed this type of legislation and supported successful opposition campaigns.
- **A SWAC Member commented:** From the recycling industry perspective, recyclers do a good job of processing the material that are collected curbside. There continues to be a big challenge with educating consumers on which materials to place in each bin. I think that there is still a big, universal need to educate and encourage consumers to bring these materials back (to be recycled) or put them in the right bin. Whichever system is most convenient, equitable, and accessible is a good thing but the material can't be processed if we don't get it back.
- **A SPU Staff Member commented:** One of the things that have been shown from deposit systems elsewhere is that the real gain in outcomes is with moving bottles and cans from the garbage into the deposit program. The deposit fee is really motivating for people when it comes to recycling.
- **A SWAC Member commented:** I'm interested in understanding better what participation looks like under these programs.
- **A SPU Staff Member responded:** Two years ago, the legislature funded a study on recycling outcomes in Washington. The study looks at all the different types of packaging in Washington and how much of what is sold into the market is getting effectively recycled. The report is expected to be published soon and we will be happy to share it with SWAC once available. That said, Seattle meticulously studies its waste and recycling streams in a way that no other jurisdiction does. We are in the process of completing the most recent round of waste characterization studies. Once completed, we will create an aggregate report that will focus on capture rates (i.e., of all the material that Seattle residents are generating, how much is making it to the right place, and how much is going to the wrong place.) We already know that Seattleites do a pretty good job of recycling but when we look at it on a material-by-material basis, the data shows a much fuller story and sheds light on opportunities for improvement or enhancement that will be really useful in informing programmatic and communications efforts and helping us understand how we're doing and where we're going next.

7. SWAC Chat

- Café-style conversation with the group. SWAC Members were asked to respond to the questions: How did you get started in your current position and role? What inspired you to pursue the role you are in today?

Adjourned 7:33.