

Recycling Reform Advisory Council

Meeting Notes

August 13, 2026, 10:00am-2:00 pm PT

[Meeting Slide Deck Link](#)

- Welcome (10:00-10:05am)
 - Review agenda
 - Housekeeping and Attendance

Name	Organization	Attendance
Megan Daum	American Beverage Association	Y
Danielle Waterfield	AMERIPEN	Y
Casey Bouchard	Methow Recycles	Y
Jeff Zillich	WM	Y
Rick Vahl	Waste Connections	Y
Amanda Dalton	Northwest Grocery Retail Association	N
Moji Igun	Zero Waste Washington	Y
Ming-Ming Tung-Edelman	CareMakers Collective	Y
Alissa Campbell	Recology	Y
Jay Blazey	Cedar Grove	Y
Trace Bradburn	City of Spokane	Y
McKenna Morrigan	Seattle Public Utilities	Y
Becci Piepel	Douglas County Solid Waste	Y
Grant Williams	Tribal Solid Waste Advisory Network	Y
Jocelyn Quarrell	Bold Reuse	Y
Karen Hultgren	Pierce County	Y
Michael Liptack	Friday Harbor	Y
Peter Lyon	WA State Department of Ecology	Y
Julie Gilbertson	CAA	Y

- Call for disclosure of conflicts of interest
 - No conflicts of interest disclosed
- Ecology Updates (10:15-10:30am)
 - Recycling Refund Study
 - AC Member: May I ask what the fifth modeling scenario would be?
 - Ecology: Consultants' community engagement caused them to revisit assumption in initial January model. Initial model set a distance requirement for how far residents would be willing to travel to redeem cans and bottles (5-10 miles or approximately 15 minutes). Engagement indicated residents were willing to travel further than the original model

assumed. Increasing the acceptable travel radius meant fewer collection locations were needed to meet the modeled convenience standard, which reduced the number of modeled convenience sites across the map.

- Rulemaking
- Needs Assessment
- Producer Responsibility Organization Updates (10:30-10:40am) – Julie Gilbertson, CAA
 - CAA is actively developing a timeline for consultation for later this fall, so Advisory Council can anticipate work that will occur during 2027 and build consultation into its meeting schedule.
 - CAA anticipates that many consultations will take place through public webinars in which information is provided in advance and participants can ask questions and provide input.
 - Discussion
 - AC Member: How will future PRO strategy consultations be organized and will they be publicly available?
 - CAA: CAA generally starts with statutory requirements, determines what strategies are necessary to fulfill those requirements through a program plan, and then conducts public consultations on those strategies. Council members invited to provide input on Washington consultation process.
 - [Oregon's plan consultation webinars and webpage](#)
 - [Keep in touch with CAA Washington](#)
- Subcommittee Updates (10:40-10:45am)
 - Needs Assessment Subcommittee – status update
 - Subcommittee will meet in preparation for the 9/29 draft of the needs assessment.
 - Equity Subcommittee – status update
 - Subcommittee is also waiting to review the upcoming needs assessment draft.
 - Statewide List Subcommittee – status update
- Statewide Lists Discussion – Part 1 (10:45-12:00pm)
 - Current state of the Statewide List – Dan Weston, Ecology
 - **Today vs. Future List**
 - Tension in subcommittee discussion with some evaluation criteria reflecting what Washington's recycling system can handle today, while the RRA is intended to drive investment and create stronger statewide system by 2030.
 - Subcommittee generally supported including a broader range of materials at the preliminary stage for purposes of needs assessment. Excluding a material now may prevent the needs assessment from addressing it later. This does not mean that every material on the preliminary list may be on the 2030 list.
 - Perspectives from local government AC members on anticipated impacts of this list prior to 2030
 - Rural: Preliminary lists unlikely to change current collection practices prior to 2030 because the county currently collects a relatively limited set of materials
 - Larger municipality: Already collects many of the proposed materials so not expecting much change prior to 2030 in response to this list, but smaller communities face greater obstacles with scale
 - **Residential Recycling and Public Place Collection Lists**
 - Will alignment between both lists be maintained even though the statutory prohibition on collecting off-list materials applies specifically to residential recycling?
 - Ecology: Jurisdictions may have more flexibility with public-place collection and could potentially add materials locally, but those additional materials might not be eligible for PRO reimbursement. Ecology prefers that the two lists remain harmonized for a simpler system and clearer public education.
 - **Residential Recycling vs. Alternative Collection**

- How does traditional drop-off recycling at transfer stations fit with the distinction between the two lists?
 - Ecology: Residential recycling does not mean curbside only. If a jurisdiction provides residential recycling through drop-offs, that is residential. Alternative collection refers to a collection pathway outside the normal residential recycling service (e.g., retail sites, concierge collection, mail back, etc.)
- **Composting List**
 - Has there been consideration of items that are both compostable and recyclable?
 - Ecology: Yes, materials were evaluated by multiple potential streams. There is a column in the statewide lists spreadsheet that identifies which pathway it was considered for.
- **Material Categorization and Definitions**
 - Concerns that the working list categories were inconsistent or difficult to interpret (e.g., why some items on these lists are listed by resin and product type and then others are listed as "food serviceware". For example, with PP, why wouldn't the list include PP cups and containers rather than be lumped together?)
 - Ecology: Initial categories were derived from state waste characterization studies. Those studies contain very granular categories, including materials that are ultimately non-covered. Ecology consolidated and removed obvious non-covered categories to arrive at the appx. 100 candidate-material starting point. Over time, the categories will need to be consolidated and refined.
 - Covered vs. non-covered materials
 - Why are apparent non-covered materials (e.g., newspapers) on the list?
 - Ecology: "Newsprint" is listed as a material category. Newspapers themselves are excluded, but newsprint can also be used for covered packaging, flyers etc. Non-covered materials should not intentionally appear on the preliminary lists, so flag if you identify any.
- **Evaluation Criteria and Weighting**
 - How consistently is Ecology documenting the justification behind each material score? Are some criteria weighed more heavily than others?
 - Ecology: Supporting information will be refined as additional research, RFI submissions, and public comments are received. The current detailed lists are primarily a planning tool for needs assessment, but public-facing categories will likely be simpler.
 - Ecology: There is no formal numerical weighting system across the evaluation criteria. Instead, the significance of a criterion may differ by material. One particularly serious concern could outweigh otherwise favorable scores (e.g., the absence of a responsible end market). A weak market would not necessarily exclude a material preliminarily because the needs assessment may identify opportunities for improvement.
- **End Markets and Confidence in the Recycling System**
 - Local government reps emphasized that the future program should not just increase the number of things collected. A desired outcome is ensuring materials collected from residents are genuinely valuable and converted into new products, helping reduce consumer confusion and rebuild trust in recycling.
- **Collection Methods and Glass**
 - Version 1 of list proposed glass be collected separately from other residential recyclables. Subcommittee recognized that the statewide list should identify whether a material is suitable for residential recycling without prematurely dictating how every jurisdiction must collect it.
 - Ecology: Confirmed that collection method will be addressed more fully through the needs assessment. Options for glass could potentially include commingled curbside collection, curbside separation or drop-off, and the needs assessment may consider whether Washington should have one statewide recommended method or allow different approaches locally.

- **Materials Identified for Additional Evaluation**

- Aseptic and gable-top cartons: Support keeping these materials on the residential recycling list but identified an unresolved question about what happens after collection. The appropriate pathway could have significant implications for infrastructure investment and responsible end markets.
- Fiber food-service packaging: AC members want the needs assessment to examine whether different forms have different effects on processing and responsible end markets rather than treating all fiber food-service packaging the same.
- PET thermoforms: Recommended examining the sortation and marketing of PET thermoforms, noting similarities to the questions raised about cartons and how materials ultimately move into separate commodity bales and end markets.
- Aerosol containers: Multiple requests for further evaluation of aerosols for residential recycling rather than evaluating them only for alternative collection with risk of losing recyclable material if the collection pathway is too restrictive.
 - Ecology: Aerosols can be evaluated under both residential and alternative pathways during the needs assessment even if the final program ultimately requires one pathway to be selected.

- **Alignment with Industry Standards and Other EPR States**

- Recommend that material category names, descriptions, and scope be better aligned with industry standards where appropriate (e.g., PET bottles).
- Waste-characterization categories are a useful starting point, but the program should not remain tied to them when other definitions are more meaningful for sortation, marketing, fee setting, and producer reporting.
- PRO: Alignment needs to cover not only names, but the actual scope of materials included within a category because producers operating across multiple EPR states need clear and consistent guidance.

- Lunch/Break (12:00pm-12:30pm)

- Continue Statewide Lists Discussion – Part 2 (12:30-1:45pm)

- **Alternative Collection List – Overall Approach**

- Questions whether the same “evaluate now, refine later” logic used for residential recycling should also be applied to alternative collection. If potentially viable alternative collection materials are left on the “not to be collected” list, they may not receive the same needs assessment analysis.

- **Shredded Paper**

- A paper product can begin as a conventional covered paper product but become operationally difference once a resident shreds it. Shredded paper is typically undesirable in commingled recycling. Some communities offer special collection events or other services for shredded paper.
 - Ecology: If covered paper becomes shredded, the underlying material may still be considered a covered paper product. The collection list is whether future EPR should provide a funded recovery pathway for that material.
 - Ecology: If shredded paper is not placed on a collection list, existing municipal services for it would not become program-supported or reimbursable simply by virtue of the EPR system. If it is placed on the alternative collection list, the PRO would become responsible for proposing an appropriate collection method in its program plan.
- Covered vs. non-covered shredded paper
 - Concerns about how a collection system could distinguish covered consumer paper products from excluded paper or commercial paper once shredded.
 - Ecology: This is an implementation issue. Similar covered/non-covered crossover will occur in other streams and methodologies for reimbursement will need to account for

those realities. The needs assessment and later program development will need to examine the implications of shredded paper.

- Some support for moving shredded paper to the alternative collection list for evaluation in the needs assessment.
- Some reservations because shredded paper is a complex topic and there is uncertainty about how this would be handled.

○ **Alternative Collection Materials**

▪ EPS Non-Food Packaging

- Clarification that EPS non-food packaging is what's being proposed for alternative collection (e.g., foam blocks).

▪ Black Plastic Packaging

- Black plastics are not appropriate for the standard residential recycling list, but that does not necessarily mean they should be excluded from all recycling pathways. Alternative collection should include black #1, #2 and #5 plastic packaging (e.g., nursery containers, takeout containers)

▪ Bulky Plastic Packaging

- Suggest carrying it forward since dedicated collection and responsible markets already exist for at least portions of the category, making needs-assessment evaluation worthwhile.

○ **Washington vs. Other EPR States**

- Caution against just mirroring Oregon. Washington differs in volumes, recycling infrastructure, markets and statutory structure. Oregon should be treated as a reference rather than a template.
- Ecology: Minnesota and Maryland are expected to have lists available before Washington reaches later stages of program development, creating further opportunities for comparison.

○ **Evaluating Materials Now**

- Materials on the “not to be collected” list may drop out of needs assessment, which is a missed opportunity where Washington communities already collect the material. Carrying a material forward for analysis also does not guarantee its final inclusion. October preliminary lists are not the final and the PRO may propose changes.

○ **Vote on recommendations**

▪ [Vote 1 – Recommendations 1-4](#)

- **Decision: Vote 1 passed unanimously among voting members.**
 - Absent: Amanda Dalton

▪ [Vote 2 – Alternative Collection V2 recommendations](#)

- “The Alternative Collection List should be expanded to include additional materials.”
- **Decision: Vote 2 passed by majority.**
 - Danielle Waterfield voted NO because I am concerned with shredded paper being included without further evaluation as discussed on today's call.
 - Absent: Amanda Dalton

• **Public Comment (1:45-1:55pm)**

- No public comments received

• **Preview of Next Meeting Content (1:55-2:00pm)**

- September 10: Statewide List Subcommittee meeting remains tentatively scheduled
- September 17: Advisory Council meeting. Focus will be the updated Recycling Refund Study,
- October 8: Hybrid Advisory Council meeting at the WM Smart Center in Spokane; Focus will be preliminary needs assessment.

• **Adjourn**