

Recycling Reform Advisory Council

Meeting Agenda

October 8, 2026, 10:00am-2:00pm PT

[Meeting Slide Deck Link](#)

- Welcome
 - Review agenda
 - Housekeeping and attendance

Name	Organization	Attendance
Megan Daum	American Beverage Association	Y
Danielle Waterfield	AMERIPEN	Y
Casey Bouchard	Methow Recycles	Y
Delegate: Aspen Kvicala		
Jeff Zillich	WM	Y
Rick Vahl	Waste Connections	Y
Amanda Dalton	Northwest Grocery Retail Association	Y
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 Morigan	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
Delegate: Pete Moe		
Peter Lyon	WA State Department of Ecology	Y
Julie Gilbertson	CAA	Y

- Call for disclosure of conflicts of interest related to meeting agenda
 - No conflicts of interest disclosed
- Producer Responsibility Organization Update – Julie Gilbertson & Geoffrey Inch, CAA [[CAA Slides](#)]
 - Q&A/Discussion
 - AC Member: What does “essential infrastructure” mean in the description of early fee uses?
 - CAA: The phrase should not imply purchases of physical assets such as trucks or facilities. Early fees support direct and indirect costs of developing the program plan and relevant regulatory expenses, including costs billed by Ecology. CAA agreed to clarify the language.
 - AC Member: Is there a public list of producers registered with CAA?

- CAA: A registration list is included as an appendix to the PRO registration materials submitted to Ecology. Updated producer and brand information will be provided through subsequent registration submissions.
 - Resource: <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/ezshare/SWM/RRR/CircularActionAlliance-WashingtonRegistration.pdf>
- AC Member: When will service providers be able to receive reimbursement, and how does that differ from early fees?
 - CAA: Early fees precede implementation of the approved program plan. Consultation on program fees and service-provider reimbursement methods and agreements is anticipated in 2027–2028, with plan approval anticipated in 2029 and implementation and reimbursement beginning in 2030.
- AC Member: How can early fees be established before Washington adopts detailed material categories and collection lists?
 - CAA: Early fees rely on reporting by eight broader material classes. Programmatic fees will later be developed around Washington-specific requirements and detailed covered-material categories.
- AC Member: How will producers know what early fee invoices cover and how to prepare?
 - CAA: Written resources and schedules are available through its producer-services channels, and an October 21 producer webinar is planned to explain fee calculation, budgeting, and payment.
- Needs Assessment draft [[Preliminary Needs Assessment Overview Slides](#)]
 - Introduction of PNA
 - Discussion
 - AC Members: When will investments to expand collection and processing capacity become eligible for funding? How will reimbursement for existing services differ from upfront capital investments, and could spending before 2030 be reimbursed?
 - These issues require further work through rulemaking and program planning. Members were cautioned not to assume investments made now would be reimbursable; eligibility has not yet been settled.
 - AC Member: Where do service-provider funding agreements and the reimbursement methodology fit on the implementation roadmap? How will reimbursement concepts established in statute carry into implementation?
 - Service-provider agreements, fee methodology, and reimbursement details will be developed through consultation in 2027–2028 and informed by statutory requirements, rules, and needs assessment findings.
 - Contracts and Costs
 - Discussion
 - AC Member: Are reported tons and costs based on the same service scope? Do the cost-per-ton figures include residuals or other materials?
 - Reported amounts were generally used as submitted through service-provider registration and other sources. Data requests did not clearly specify all cost and tonnage boundaries; future reporting should clarify definitions and residuals.
 - AC Members: What does the statewide cost figure represent, and what explains the wide regional cost ranges, including unusually low values?
 - Differences in how respondents grouped service areas, reported costs, and allocated expenses may contribute to outliers. A chat comment suggested that some smaller figures may reflect recycling costs bundled into garbage service charges.

- AC Member: How do data collected through the needs assessment surveys relate to annual reporting requirements? Could local service areas be defined more precisely?
 - Annual statutory reporting and the broader surveys have different purposes and scopes. More granular service-area definitions could improve usefulness for jurisdictions and future analysis.
- Materials Quantities
 - Discussion
 - AC Member: What share of covered materials enters the garbage stream rather than recycling or organics?
 - Approximately 52% of covered material in the analysis was reported in garbage streams, with important differences among regions and collection methods. More detailed tonnage and composition information is included in the draft assessment.
 - AC Members: Can the analysis provide clearer comparisons of material disposition by region, service type, and access to recycling? Members noted that figures alone may not explain whether low diversion reflects missing service, limited accepted materials, or participation barriers.
 - Most residential material, including recyclables and garbage, is managed through curbside services, making improved access and performance in curbside systems a big opportunity. Specific material categories, including aluminum cans, were identified as important losses to disposal.
 - AC Members: More transparent denominators, clearer labels, and cross-references to service access data should be used so that the conclusions and gaps can be understood in context.
- Service Level
 - Resource: [Recycling Needs Assessment Map](#)
 - Discussion
 - AC Members: There is a difference between a service being offered in a jurisdiction, and residents actually subscribing to or using it. For multifamily housing, individual residents may not control whether recycling or organics service is provided.
 - Subscription and participation data remain limited and will require more engagement with service providers and clearer definitions. Participation can mean different things, including the share of eligible households subscribed or the share of subscribers setting out material.
 - AC Member: How are rural areas defined in the interactive map?
 - The urban and rural classifications shown on the map are based on the **U.S. Census Bureau's urban-rural designation methodology**.
 - As described in the GIS metadata, the Census Bureau designates each individual census block as either urban or rural. Because larger geographic areas (such as block groups, census tracts, counties, and states) are made up of many census blocks, those areas can contain a mix of both urban and rural populations.
 - The map visualizes this distribution using a color gradient:
 - **Dark green** represents areas that are **100% urban**.
 - **Dark yellow** represents areas that are **100% rural**.
 - Areas with a mix of urban and rural population are shown in lighter shades of green or yellow, indicating the relative predominance of one population type over the other.
 - According to the Census Bureau, "urban areas represent densely developed territory and encompass residential, commercial, and other non-residential

urban land uses." Rural areas include all population, housing, and territory not classified as urban.

- For the 2020 Census, an urban area consists of a densely settled core of census blocks meeting minimum housing unit density and/or population density thresholds, including adjacent territory with non-residential urban land uses. To qualify as an urban area, the territory must contain at least **2,000 housing units** or a **population of at least 5,000**.
- Additional information on the Census Bureau's urban-rural classification methodology can be found here: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>
- AC Member: Does the analysis account for tourists using drop-off collection sites?
 - The available analysis identifies facility access by location and does not distinguish residents from visitors using those sites.
- Infrastructure and Capacity
 - Discussion
 - AC Member: How does the assessment distinguish between transfer stations, drop-off collection facilities, and material recovery facilities (MRFs)? Are those terms used consistently?
 - Some facilities offer multiple functions, and classification can be challenging. Participants suggested clarifying definitions and better connecting the transfer and drop-off discussion to descriptions of collection service access.
 - AC Members: Noted that collection may also occur outside traditional municipal and franchised hauling channels, including specialized drop-off programs, retail take-back, subscriptions, and other alternative collection services.
 - Related information has been incorporated into the technical memo, but additional context may be needed in the preliminary assessment itself.
 - AC Members: How do the seven MRFs identified in the analysis relate to other facilities that handle covered material? Does the analysis account for changes in facility operations or capacity?
 - Definitions and screening criteria affected which facilities were counted. Future analysis and public comments may identify additional facilities or needed distinctions.
 - AC Members: The assessment needs to distinguish between facilities with theoretical space to handle additional material and facilities that can realistically expand with available labor, equipment, capital, and end markets.
- End Markets
 - Discussion
 - AC Members: Where is the boundary between a processing facility and an end market, particularly for facilities conducting beneficiation or other preprocessing before material is sold or used?
 - Those distinctions are not always clear for specific materials and processes and may need more explicit treatment in later analysis.
 - AC Member: Orcas Recycling Services used an on-island glass crusher to produce 83 tons of glass sand in 2025 for local landscaping and construction. Should small local applications like this be considered an end-market option?
 - Members are encouraged to identify missing markets and share information on actual purchases, capacity, and barriers so that the full assessment can be improved.
- Public Comment

- WM: WM manages voluntary agreements with King, Snohomish, and Spokane counties to improve recycling outcomes through research and innovative programming. These programs are permitted under the UTC framework, funded through the sale of recyclables, and separate from standard recycling education arrangements between jurisdictions and haulers. Through these agreements, WM tests new approaches, conducts pilot programs, measures results, and shares findings statewide. WM believes that continuing this type of research and innovation as the RRA is implemented will help improve recycling access and outcomes across Washington.
- Zero Waste Washington: I was not happy to hear that two of the four waste companies have not responded to the needs assessment data request, particularly since two of those companies are represented on the Advisory Council. Accurate cost data is essential to developing the needs assessment, and the recycling cost estimates presented today appear to have significant inaccuracies. Without more complete information from waste companies, the PRO will have to make assumptions that could ultimately work against those companies. I strongly encourage the companies that have not responded to submit their actual cost data so the needs assessment can reflect their costs and support accurate reimbursement under the future program.
- Preview of Next Meeting Content
 - Ecology encouraged written public comments on the preliminary needs assessment by October 30, 2026. Council members were also encouraged to send corrections, missing data, and follow-up information requested by the consultant team.
 - Public Comment Form: <https://ecology.commentinput.com/?id=QbChArB7j>
 - The next Advisory Council meeting is November 19, 2026. The Council is expected to discuss public comments and the next stages of the needs assessment work.
 - AC members were invited to suggest locations for in-person meetings in 2027.
- Adjourn