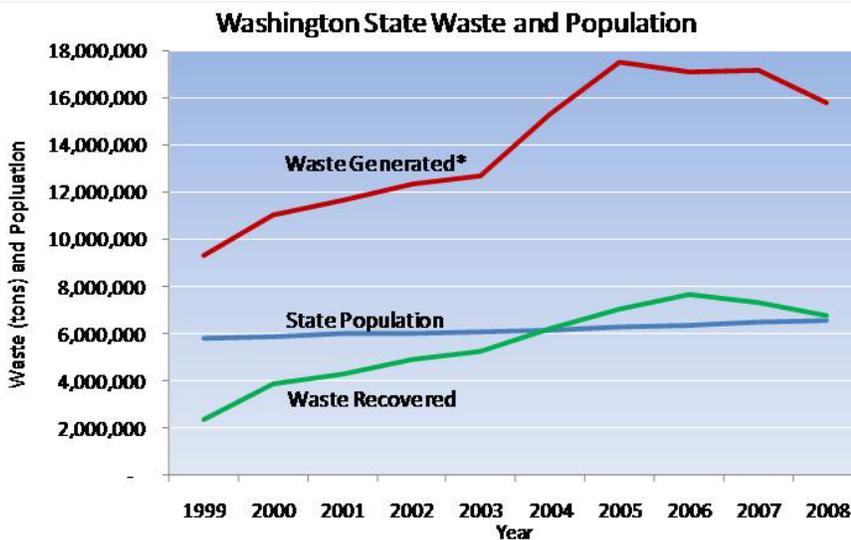


Think Outside the Landfill

We generated nearly 16 million tons of waste in 2008. That's more than two and a half tons per person. Some of it was recycled or otherwise diverted from disposal, but not enough. Nine million tons was thrown away, even though much of it was not really "waste." For example, since 2003 we've buried more than \$1 billion worth of recyclable materials in landfills. We have yet to reach the 1995 recycling goal of 50 percent. Waste generation continues to grow faster than our population.



*Includes waste from citizens, industry, business, and manufacturers

How did we get here?

Washington's main environmental law related to solid waste ([Chapter 70.95](#) of the Revised Code of Washington) was passed in 1969. At that time, the majority of waste was disposed in open burning dumps. The focus of the 1969 law was closure of those dumps and construction of new "sanitary landfills" to control air pollution.

Our waste stream, which was once mostly organic, now contains products and packaging made of a variety of materials, including some toxic substances.

Since 1969, the Legislature amended Chapter 70.95 RCW 28 times in response to the changing waste stream. Other legislative efforts resulted in standalone pieces of legislation to encourage and increase recycling efforts, to address specific products, including [labeling of plastics](#), [used oil recycling](#), [mercury](#), and more recently, [electronics recycling](#), [children's safe products](#) and [lead wheel weights](#) laws.

REDUCING WASTE IN WASHINGTON

Ecology is kicking off the solid waste law update process by asking for input to identify problems with our solid waste laws.

Invitation to Participate

Problem Assessment Workshops

We need your knowledge, ideas and expertise to help modify our laws to reduce waste and improve the solid waste management system. Please come to one of the workshops below to provide input on problems with Washington's solid waste laws. You can also provide input on-line at the [Solid Waste Law Update website](#).

April 13: Ephrata 1 pm – 4 pm, Grant County Public Works, 124 Enterprise St. SE

April 14: Yakima 1 pm – 4 pm, Ecology, 15 West Yakima Ave Suite 200

April 15: Spokane 1 pm – 4 pm, Magnuson Center, 2917 W. Fort George Wright Drive

May 4: Lacey 1 pm – 4 pm, Ecology HQ Auditorium, 300 Desmond Drive

May 6: Mt. Vernon 1 pm – 4 pm, Skagit County Commissioner's Hearing Room, 1800 Continental Place

May 12: Seattle 1 pm – 4 pm and 6 pm – 9 pm, King Street Center, 201 South Jackson Street, 8th floor conference center

Meetings will be scheduled later in 2010 to discuss potential solutions.

We've done a lot of things right!

Washington State is seen as a leader in solid waste management and recycling. In the mid 1980's Washington's recycling rate was less than 20 percent. Significant recycling and waste reduction laws were passed in 1989. Since then:

- Local governments worked hard implementing programs and policies to achieve higher rates of recycling.
- Private industry invested in equipment to collect recyclable materials.
- Markets responded to new available flows of material.

Today, our recycling rate is 45 percent.

We can do better!

New approaches to handling materials bring new challenges to protect human health and the environment. Today we have new products that weren't imagined 40 years ago. We also have solid waste handling facilities that weren't around either, along with a lot more waste. We can reduce wastes and conserve materials by:

- Eliminating waste wherever possible.
- Reducing product toxicity.
- Recycling the materials we use.
- Disposing of residuals safely.

Updating our laws can better address solid waste management challenges and help us move "[beyond waste](#)":

- Encourage efficient use of materials.
- Improve environmental performance of products.
- Use the competitive market economy to promote innovative technologies and creative materials use.
- Ensure safe operation of materials management facilities.
- Responsibly regulate solid waste disposal facilities.
- Provide stable funding for local programs across the state.

We want to hear from you!

In the upcoming workshops, we want to hear from everyone about issues and problems with our solid waste law. After we have identified key issues we can begin to collaboratively address them.

Some issues we've identified include:

- Current law can inhibit recycling and reuse of beneficial materials because they are legally defined as solid waste.
- We need more recycling facilities in underserved areas of the state.

Moving Beyond Waste

The Beyond Waste Plan is Washington state's combined solid and hazardous waste plan. It's 30-year vision is to reduce most wastes and toxic substances, and use remaining wastes as resources. However, our solid waste laws do not fully facilitate moving "beyond waste."

www.ecy.wa.gov/beyondwaste

Stay Involved

- Come to a workshop (dates/times on the front page).
- Use the on-line comment form at the [solid waste law update website](#).
- Sign up to receive email updates on this process on the [solid waste law update listserv](#).
- Keep track of our progress at the 70.95 website:

www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/7095

Contact information

Jay Shepard
360-407-7040
jay.shepard@ecy.wa.gov

Special accommodations

To ask about the availability of this document in a version for the visually impaired, call the Waste 2 Resources Program at 360-407-6900.

Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.

- The existing solid waste financing system is based on and encourages waste disposal. If recycling increases, waste generation goes down and revenue goes down. This creates a disincentive to promote recycling or reuse of materials.
- The law creates conflicts between hauling recyclable or reusable materials and hauling wastes for disposal.
- Conflicts of interest occur in some solid waste permit oversight. While the state sets regulatory standards for solid waste facilities, local government enforces them. Conflicts can happen when a local health department issues a the solid waste permit to another local department and both report to the same authority.
- We lack local industrial capacity to use recycled materials. Many recovered materials are sent overseas for recycling.
- There is disparity in local jurisdiction's programs, funding, and regulatory oversight depending on available resources.
- There is little or no regulatory authority over material recovery facilities and permit requirements vary from one local jurisdiction to another.