



# Northwest Product Stewardship Council

## **2008 Packaging/Beverage Container Subcommittee Issue Paper April 2008**

**Subcommittee Members:** Bill Smith, Chair, City of Tacoma; Vicky Salazar, EPA; Lisa Sepanski, King County; Sego Jackson, Snohomish County; Dave Peters, Kitsap County; Peter Spendelow, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality; Scott Klag, Portland Metro; Rick Winterhalter, Clackamas County; Shannon McClelland, Washington State Department of Ecology; Dick Lilly, City of Seattle; David Stitzhal, NWPS Coordinator

### **The Issue**

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- Packaging comprises 22-25 % of the waste stream in the State of Washington and beverage containers represent 25 % of the packaging stream (WDOE, 2006). Because Washington has no deposit law, beverage containers also comprise a large percentage of the litter stream, 14.6 to 31.4% by the latest statewide study (WDOE, 2004).
- In Oregon, packaging makes up an estimated 20-30% of household and business wastes. Oregon has had a bottle bill for beer and soft drinks since 1971. In 2005, an estimated 83% of covered containers were returned for recycling. The recycling rate for beverage containers not covered by the bottle bill was only 36%. Before the bottle bill, beverage containers made up as much as 40% of roadside litter. By 1979, this had dropped to 6% and the impact of the bottle bill on litter remains high. However, recent unofficial litter sorts indicate the growth in non-covered beverage containers and the decline in the value of the deposit due to inflation are resulting in more containers in litter. In 2007, the Oregon legislature amended the bottle bill to include water bottles. The legislation also calls for a task force to examine additional issues including adding more containers and increasing the refund value.
- Packaging is made from increasingly scarce resources such as petroleum and energy intensive processes such as those used to make aluminum cans. When these materials are thrown away, the imbedded resources and energy are wasted.
- Another major issue is changing patterns of consumer behavior including more consumption of beverages outside the home. Inadequate provision of recycling containers or a low refund incentive leads to increased disposal of these containers.
- Legislatively the climate in Washington State and Oregon is more favorable than it has been for many years. Statewide environmental coalitions have been very successful in getting their priority legislation passed in recent legislative sessions.

### **The NWPS Position**

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The Council's current position for Washington State is to continue to work with all stakeholders in the packaging and beverage industry to develop programs that will increase the recycling rate of these valuable materials.

In the future, if it becomes apparent that we will be unable to get all stakeholders to agree on moving forward with a solution that includes product stewardship principles, we will need to reconsider our position.

The Council's current position for the State of Oregon is to work with stakeholders to improve the existing system.

**Proposed Solution/Recommendations**

- For the Washington State members of the Council, the NWPSC in partnership with the EPA is convening a state-wide panel of stakeholders to explore mutually agreeable methods to increase beverage container recovery. The current strategy is to work with the industry stakeholders in Washington to implement two pilot projects to assess whether incentives, other than cash deposits at the point of retail, will increase the recovery of used beverage containers. These projects will be funded by the National Recycling Coalition (NRC) and the Beverage Product Environmental Council (BPEC) with assistance from local Washington State government and non-profit representatives, if needed. The projects submitted are designed to cover retail and event locations. The projects are designed to collect data on the impacts of the projects and if successful, the projects can be replicated across the State with minimal start up costs or need for on-going funding. In the event that funding is not obtained from the industry stakeholder groups, the Council will re-consider our strategy.
- In Oregon, a task force established by the recent legislation expanding the bottle bill (SB 707) convened in the fall of 2007 to address issues including redemption centers, coverage of all beverages and containers and increasing the deposit. The current Council strategy is to provide technical assistance to those working to further modernize the bottle bill.

**Subcommittee Next Steps/Timeline**

*Washington State Timeline*

November 2007	Determine if we can design projects that will test the parameters mentioned above and in the Request for Proposals (RFP) sent out earlier this year
February 2008	Final funding decision from NRC and BPEC
May 2008	Implement projects that have funding from industry stakeholders
December 2008	Projects End
February 2009	Preliminary Reports Due
March 2009	Final Reports Due

*Oregon Timeline*

Sept.\Oct, 2007	Bottle Bill Task Force appointed
Oct.2007 thru Oct 2008	Task Force meets
November 1, 2008	Task Force report due
January 1, 2009	Expanded bottle bill effective (e.g. water bottles included)

**References**

Washington State Department of Ecology (WDOE). (2004). Washington 2004 State Litter Study, Litter Generation and Composition Report, March 2005. Retrieved on October 1, 2007 from <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0507046.html>

Washington State Department of Ecology (WDOE), (2006). Solid Waste in Washington State, Fifteenth Annual Status Report. Retrieved on October 1, 2007 from <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0507029.html>