

Support Compost, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Legislation in Washington State

WHEREAS the fossil fuel industry is ramping up plastics production to backfill losses in gas production with little to no effort to make recyclable packaging,¹ many consumer products come in packaging that is difficult or not eligible to recycle with less than 5% of plastic being recycled,^{2,3} producers should be required to adopt practices and utilize materials which enable greater recycling or decomposition, and

WHEREAS batteries in electronic devices including those found in cell phones, computers, and cars contain rare earth materials, predominantly mined in developing countries involving child labor and ecologically damaging processes^{4,5} should be regulated to require environmental protections, worker safety, and mandatory but readily available recycling; and

WHEREAS consumer products can be manufactured and marketed in such a way that they are easier to repair by owners or local independent repair shops thus increasing their useful lifespan, saving consumer dollars, and reducing negative environmental impacts; and

WHEREAS the number of common place plastic containers can be greatly reduced by implementing refill outlets including: water bottle refill stations, bulk dispensers of personal products such as shampoo and hand lotion in hotels and grocery stores - and expanded polystyrene foam (aka Styrofoam) floatation devices including docks pollute waterways^{6,7} and cause starvation and illness in wildlife^{8,9} can be replaced with environmentally responsible materials including both marine *and* fresh water encapsulated floats,¹⁰ and

WHEREAS composting is an effective way to reduce landfill volume while improving climate impacts by enriching soils with living ecosystems of micro-organisms that capture and store excess carbon, taking it out of the atmosphere and sequestering it where it can be used to enhance farm and garden productivity¹¹ the implementation of uniform composting regulations throughout the state would benefit the environment and food production; and

WHEREAS Zero Waste Washington¹² is leading an effort to pass legislation in Washington State to achieve greater reduction, reuse, and recycling of consumer products and organic materials,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 46th legislative district (LD) of the Washington State Democratic Party encourages members to support legislation, petitions, testimony, resolutions, memorandums, calls for action, and/or sign-on letters which promote: the reduction of waste products such as plastics, increase composting of organic materials, require manufacturer responsibility for recyclable packaging, require recycling and reuse of battery components, and call for the manufacture of products that consumers can have repaired;

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that this resolution shall be forwarded to the Washington State Representatives and Senator from the 46th LD of the Washington State Democrats

References:

1. CNBC, Feb 1, 2022, How the fossil fuel industry is pushing plastics on the world, by Katie Bringham <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/01/29/how-the-fossil-fuel-industry-is-pushing-plastics-on-the-world-.html>

2. Greenpeace - NPR October 24, 2022, by Laura Sullivan - Recycling plastic is practically impossible — and the problem is getting worse: <https://www.npr.org/2022/10/24/1131131088/recycling-plastic-is->

[practically-impossible-and-the-problem-is-getting-worse](https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/GPUS_FinalReport_2022.pdf) & Greenpeace 2022 full report update:
https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/GPUS_FinalReport_2022.pdf

3. World Economic Forum, June 22, 2022. Top 25 recycling facts and statistics for 2022.

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/06/recycling-global-statistics-facts-plastic-paper/>

4. CBS News, March 6, 2018 - The toll of the cobalt mining industry on health and the environment:

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/the-toll-of-the-cobalt-mining-industry-congo/>.

5. The Guardian, Dec 18, 2019, Jonathan Watts - How the race for cobalt risks turning it from miracle metal to deadly chemical. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/dec/18/how-the-race-for-cobalt-risks-turning-it-from-miracle-metal-to-deadly-chemical>

6. Crosscut, March 5, 2021 by Samantha Allen - What it takes to recycle foam blocks in Seattle:

<https://crosscut.com/opinion/2021/03/what-it-takes-recycle-foam-blocks-seattle>

7. Save The River, February 23, 2022 by STR Admin. <https://www.savetheriver.org/latest-news/save-the-river-advocates-for-ban-on-exposed-polystyrene-dock-floats/>

8. National Library of Medicine, July 27, 2009 by Murray R. Gregory - Environmental implications of plastic debris in marine settings—entanglement, ingestion, smothering, hangers-on, hitch-hiking and alien invasions: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2873013/>

9. Science Direct, July 2022, by Roberta Nugnes, Margherita Lavorgna, Elena Orlo, Chiara Russo, Marina Isidori - Toxic impact of polystyrene microplastic particles in freshwater organisms: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0045653522008669>

10. Green America, March 6, 2018 <https://www.greenamerica.org/blog/methods-regenerative-agriculture-4>

11. Washington State law WAC 220-660-380 - encapsulated foam flotation devices required only in saltwater environments and on limited types of structures.

<https://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=220-660-380>

12. Zero Waste Washington – and related 2023 WA State Legislative bills,

<https://zerowastewashington.org/legislative-work/>

Submitted to the 46th LD : for consideration at 2023 02 15 general meeting.

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Passed by the Environment and Climate Caucus of the Washington State Democrats: at its general meeting 2023 01 27