

Organics Management to Reduce Methane and Climate Change Workgroups

Meeting #3 Notes (August 5, 2-4pm)

- I. Welcome and Overview of agenda
 - a. Shared revised list of topics per meeting #2 input
- II. Presentation to share background on draft Food Waste Prevention plan in Washington
 - a. Mary Harrington, Department of Ecology
- III. Speaker Q&A
 - a. Discussion included physical comparison of how much 374,490 tons of edible food is in Washington (it is enough food to build a train that stretches 35 miles and is 17% by weight of the landfill/incinerator load) to better understand its implications; additional detail into formation of strategy and recommendation, which focused on research, workgroups and cooperative processes; barriers to why anaerobic digesters are not popular in Washington state includes costs, lack of support, limit to how much food waste anaerobic digesters can take, post-consumer regulations, requirements of a steady amount of food into the processor and a gas recovery and distribution system the reduces the value of the gas when adding food to the feedstock.
- IV. Topic #1 Discussion: Food waste source reduction/diversion/rescue/rescue groups
 - a. Identified definitions related to food waste and wasted food including prevention, rescue and recovery
 - b. Process is to discuss strengths and concerns for each subtopic

i. Subtopic #1: Strengthen Good Samaritan Law

Strengths	Concerns/Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cat H: Agrees with this issue. Rules vary by county – food donation and liability issue come into play. Food safety rules are different – uniform basis for what and how food can be donated would be super beneficial.• Mary H: Supports federal process. Also, there is a need for increased support for Local Health Jurisdictions (LHJs) so that there are consistent application of rules across the state.• Neil L: CA had the same concerns with a rule to limit liability. If there is a good faith effort that the food is wholesome, they are exempt from liability. CA passed legislation that was also	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• John C: If more edible food is donated to non-profits, won't those non-profits need to invest in infrastructure, including everything from storage to refrigeration and particularly tracking? Could there be some way to incentivize those investments?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Mary H.: Yes – they would need additional support to make this work.• David B: Infrastructure needs to happen all throughout the supply chain. These will be challenging issues to resolve. We have seen that food is coming from outside of the traditional sources (especially during COVID). This is a problem for hunger relief agencies – caused some issues because food was entering communities and traditional organizations did not plan for it. We would need to know what is coming where and when.

considered federal statute at the time and the CA law has not been challenged in 4+ years in effect.

- Aaron C: Are there other areas that are critical we should identify since waiting on the federal action could be an issue? Joint memorial is an option, but it may not happen fast enough. Would need review of existing WA codes and regulations. This was in the bill (HB1114).
- Jacob L: Does changing state law on food safety make a difference if there is not a change of federal law?
 - Cat H: Federal and state is needed, but bigger is better. Need to figure out how the two laws interact. Should talk to local governments on this issue and need them aligned on rules. Maybe it doesn't have to be mandated and instead adjust within guidance already in place.
- Christina W: Need input from people experiencing hunger in terms of limits of liability and need end user protection as well. BIPOC organizations are now doing food distribution work. If they are going to be receiving the food, they will need resources to support, and investments need an equity lens.

ii. Subtopic #2: Mandate (commercial) food scrap recycling to prevent food from entering landfills

Strengths	Concerns/Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cat H: Stores are already doing this! • Jay B: Infrastructure rules make sense including distance to processing. • Jeanette H: Mandates support composters and processors more than generators. Cited NJ Bill 865 – included distance from the processor – can help guarantee supply for processor. • Kate K: Many strengths associated with a mandate. Putting food in the landfill is not beneficial and benefits of capturing are clear. Barriers are infrastructure and composters willing to take material. Need to make rules about what is and isn't acceptable and need some flexibility for composters to say no and divert to landfill. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cat H: Not sure this needs to be mandated. If mandating composting, this doesn't work in counties where that service is not available. • Jay B: Other considerations – can't do this in an isolated fashion – including addressing contamination, funding, enforcement and education. • John C: A ban with nowhere for the food waste to go is a recipe for disaster. I think the point about statewide vs. local is important. Food waste going to a landfill can be soundly managed. It produces some methane, but also acts as a sink for methane. Food waste gets to landfill if it goes into a garbage bin and ends up in a truck. Should not focus on landfill, but earlier in the chain – how/before the food gets into the garbage. • Wendy W: What/how might food diversion mandates be funded to help local gov't and businesses implement food rescue and/or delivery to composting

- Jay B: Benefits are clear – diverts food waste.
- Emily C: As a landfill operator, King County has a zero-food waste in a landfill goal by 2030 and supports increasing food waste diversion from the landfill.
- Sego J: Resource Recycling conference reported on recycling organics infrastructure included in infrastructure bills. Will send links.
- Neil L: SB 1383 is not a landfill bill, it's a climate change bill. Removing organic materials from landfill needs a mandate for it to pencil out for the climate. A lot of rural exemptions in 1383. Chicken and egg situation – infrastructure won't be funded until mandate is in place. Focus on quality is important. Needs to be well thought out and paid for. Edible food recovery is also mandated in SB 1383. GHG reduction funded a lot of the infrastructure. Grants required community benefit agreements.
- Mary H: Prevention, prevention, prevention. Brad L. agrees.

facilities? A lot of work needed tactically and structurally to get this set up beyond just a mandate. Local contracts are an issue in relations to a mandate. Things don't necessarily line up in terms of timing and the investment needed.

- Tim O: Who sets the tip rates for food scraps if there is only one local composter?
- Brad L: No ban without a plan. Need demand to precede unlimited provision of supply and drive investment into facilities. Timing of a statewide plan needs to be associated with realistic timelines. Need to respect the quality and the pricing of the produced materials. Focus on quality control issues, i.e., labeling and procurement policies now.
- Neil L: Food banks and pantries driving to recover 20% is going to end up with donation dumping and them receiving materials they don't want to take and can't manage properly, in terms of getting the food to hungry people. Food relief agencies are largely volunteer based – some of these groups need better funding so they can have staff. Need resources to manage infrastructure.

iii. Subtopic #3: Create WA Center for Sustainable Food Management and map food system flows

Strengths	Concerns/Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary H: Identifying food flows is very important to help understand the process and where the best intervention points are. Need a map area to focus on. • Cat H: Great idea. Overall concept is needed in WA. Need to understand where to focus to help figure out how to have a sustainable food management system. • Jay B: Good idea if we can make it work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cat H: Concerns about cost. • Rebecca F: Did we define food? We should. Highly processed foods (our school lunch program comes to mind) do not provide the best nutrition and health benefits for people but are the food items most likely to have a long shelf life. Fresh fruits and vegetables need to be moved rapidly which comes back to the Neil's concerns about working with a largely volunteer population. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mary H: Did not define food but did talk about nutritional value issues and definitions of food waste.

- Christina W: Need to look at prevention, sourcing and production as part of food system flow. Identify upstream opportunities as well in mapping.
- Sego: Where are opportunities to involve others to develop this policy (there are Seattle staff who are food waste experts who would like to be part of the subcommittee)?

iv. Subtopic #4: Improve food school waste in Washington schools (education, lunch duration, recess before lunch)

Strengths	Concerns/Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aaron C: Schools were part of the conversation of 2019 house bill. • Wendy W: Has there been input from school districts or OPSI? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mary H: Yes – OSPI and teachers were directly involved. There is legislation in place that schools are required to provide environmental education to students. Need to expand the infrastructure to help teachers with curriculum. • Kate K: Great recommendations. Encourages kids should run around BEFORE lunch to eat all the food, but there are many space and staff considerations. • John C.: Education component is important. Not sure about 20 minutes, but WM does education in schools mostly around recycling and have found it to be very helpful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christina W.: Hesitant about being explicit about 20 minutes – OSPI pilot was not implemented yet due to COVID, although studies have shown this is effective. Also, COVID-19 and health and safety concerns might slow this down. Funding will be needed to support infrastructure • Kate K: Concerned about being overly prescriptive. • Rebecca F: These are all great ideas, however until legislature actually builds enough buildings to house all our students it is not always physically possible to give students lunch before recess. This was before COVID! I would also like to talk to food being thrown out. I do not eat our school lunches. The food is processed and carb heavy; it just doesn't taste good. Also, parents need education – students bring Taki's in their pockets and backpacks and no matter how much you police not bringing food into the building, kids are clever. Food is horrible.

v. Subtopic #5: Increase funding for local health jurisdictions [and consistent application of regs]

Strengths	Concerns/Issues

- Mary H: LHJs do a lot of work and need more funding – food issues, gyms, pools etc. Need to give oversight to them. They took a big hit in funding which has made it very difficult to do work. Hoping for more funding and staffing.
- Brad L: Permit solid waste facilities– solid waste industries – have been working to raise fees to help funding. They are dealing with COVID, zoning, cannabis facilities, air quality, etc. Usually permit facilities secure funding, but they get pulled into other priorities. After 695, funding has not been made whole.

- John C: Landfills are largest funders of public health organizations. Every ton removed decreases funding to the LHJ, not just for permitting, it also goes to all other types of programs. In Chelan/Douglas County, this helped fund vaccination program. Not a reason to send food waste to landfills but need to recognize the cause and effect.
- Ketsiri DB: The food inspectors may overlook how the food waste from donations are managed. This needs to be emphasized.
- Heather T: Could we see if cannabis funding could go to public health and specifically fund this?
- Lyset C: I would advise reaching out to the Public Health Districts Association as they have done extensive work on what sources of revenue might be out there for them to consider as they seek additional funding.

vi. Subtopic #6: Food waste tracking and analytics (required)

Strengths	Concerns/Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aaron C: Very important. Should be a priority. • Mary H: Tracking is more than just the food waste sector. It includes things like hospitals and helping them understand how much food they are generating and how much is going out the door. Restaurants, stores, etc. can benefit from knowing food waste so they can avoid this loss. • Neil L: Recyclist is a CA data management firm that works with local governments to help manage reporting requirements. They are adapting their tool set to include edible food recovery and could provide good tools to help tracking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David B: Burden of reporting can be very challenging, especially for hunger relief programs. Uphill climb to get good consistent data. Needs to be piloted to figure out variables that can be removed. Would need to be an iterative process before we have good, clean data over time.

V. Wrap-up/Next Steps

- a. Food Waste Subcommittee
 - i. Called for volunteers

1. Mary Harrington, Aaron Czyzewski, Robert Coit, Liz Fikejs, Heather Trim volunteered
- b. Next meeting: 8/19, 2-4pm
 - i. Continue Topic #1 discussion and likely start Topic #2
 - ii. Meeting notes and presentations will be posted