

State of Washington
Contamination
Reduction
and
Outreach Plan

SWANA Evergreen Chapter – August 27, 2020

The cream of the CROP

aka the Clean Stream Dream Team

- **Peter Guttchen** – *CROP-meister – Statewide Lead Planner*
- **Shannon Jones** – *Westside Materials Management Coordinator*
- **Heather Church** – *Eastside Materials Management Coordinator*
- **Paula Wesch** – *Planner and Grants Manager – ERO*
- **Steven Gimpel** - *Planner and Grants Manager – ERO*
- **Dan Weston** – *Statewide Recycling Coordinator*

Local government team

- Travis Dutton, Kim Harless and Tina Kendall – *Clark County*
- **Mason Giem** - *City of SeaTac*
- Kristine Major – *City of Spokane*
- **Suzanne Tresko** – *Spokane River Forum*
- Laura Tucker – *Jefferson County*
- **Meggan Uecker** – *Clallam County*
- Rory Wintersteen – *Lincoln County*
- **Matt Zybas** – *Snohomish County*

The roots of the CROP

In response to the seismic shocks to the recycling system caused by China Sword, Washington state passed the **Sustainable Recycling Act (HB1543)** in 2019.

- **Market Development** - created the **Recycling Development Center** to strengthen and expand secondary material markets in Washington and the NW region.
- **Cleaning up the stream** – requires Ecology and local governments to develop **Contamination Reduction and Outreach Plans** with the goal of creating a consistently clean secondary material feedstocks to produce new products.

What the law says

- Ecology must create a statewide Contamination Reduction and Outreach Plan (CROP) by July 1, 2020.

The State CROP was released on August 7, 2020 for public comment until August 31, 2020. Publication is expected in September, 2020.

- Counties with a population of over 25,000 – and cities in those counties with independent SW Plans - must include a CROP in their local Solid Waste Management Plan by July 1, 2021.

Given the delay in releasing the State CROP, adjustments can be made to this deadline if needed.

What the law says

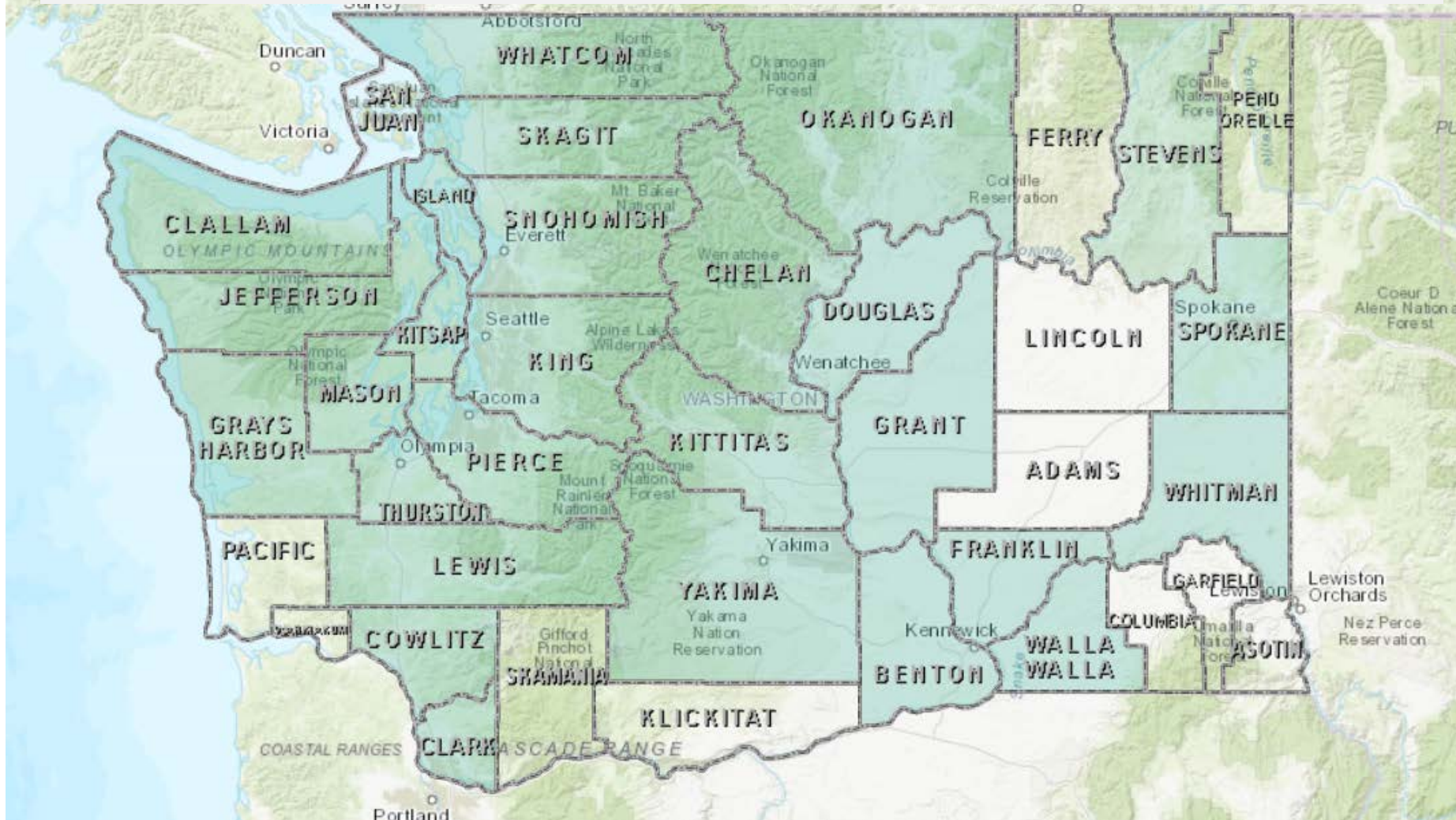
- Counties can adopt the state's CROP in lieu of creating their own plan.

*The State CROP includes a **Local CROP template** that jurisdictions can cut-and-paste into their Solid Waste Management Plans to meet the requirements of the law.*

- Ecology must provide technical assistance and guidance to help local jurisdictions determine the extent of contamination in their regional recycling and to develop CROPs.

*The State CROP includes a variety of **tools and resources** for local governments to use to develop and implement their own CROPs. It also includes recommendations to work to secure additional funding and resources in the future.*

**27 counties and 4 cities with independent SW Plans
are required to prepare their own CROPS***



**includes counties with 25,000 or more people and cities with independent SW Plans within those counties*



DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Washington State Recycling Contamination Reduction and Outreach Plan (CROP)



*August 2020 Draft
Publication 20-07-021*

Some CROP Basics

Who is the State CROP for?

The State CROP was developed to primarily serve as a guide for **cities and counties in Washington** to partner with other participants in the recycling system to reduce the costs and impacts of contamination on their recycling programs.

What contamination does the State CROP address?

Contamination of the “traditional” recycling stream from:

- **Single-family and multifamily residences**
- Dropbox collection sites
- **Commercial recycling programs**

Focused on “inbound” contamination

Inbound contamination is the material delivered primarily to MRFs for processing on its way to an end-market. It is the material that residents, businesses, communities, and haulers control.



What's not included in the CROP

- Organics and C&D contamination reduction strategies
- A list of materials to collect or not collect for recycling
- Initiatives to reduce contamination at MRFs and mills
- Market development initiatives
- Initiatives directly addressing plastic waste and pollution

Principles and Assumptions

- Prevention first
- Recycling is a means to an end
- Contamination flows downstream
- Good data is foundational
- Recycling is not free, and the costs shouldn't be hidden
- Collection and processing are not recycling
- Both quality and quantity are possible
- Regional planning and coordination are key

Roots causes of contamination

Complacency

The relatively high prices some countries were paying for our materials, combined with their low quality standards and the easy, cheap access we had to foreign markets caused complacency.

Complexity

The rapidly increasing complexity and scale of consumer packaging types and designs is far outpacing the capacity of local recycling programs, MRFs, and secondary material industries to adapt.

Roots causes of contamination

Commingling, Landfill Aversion, and the Diversion Trap

Recycling is still seen by many as a solution to a landfill or waste crisis.

This can undermine solutions further upstream like reuse and waste prevention.

The goal became recycling more, not generating less, resulting in “wishful recycling” and a dearth of data on contamination.



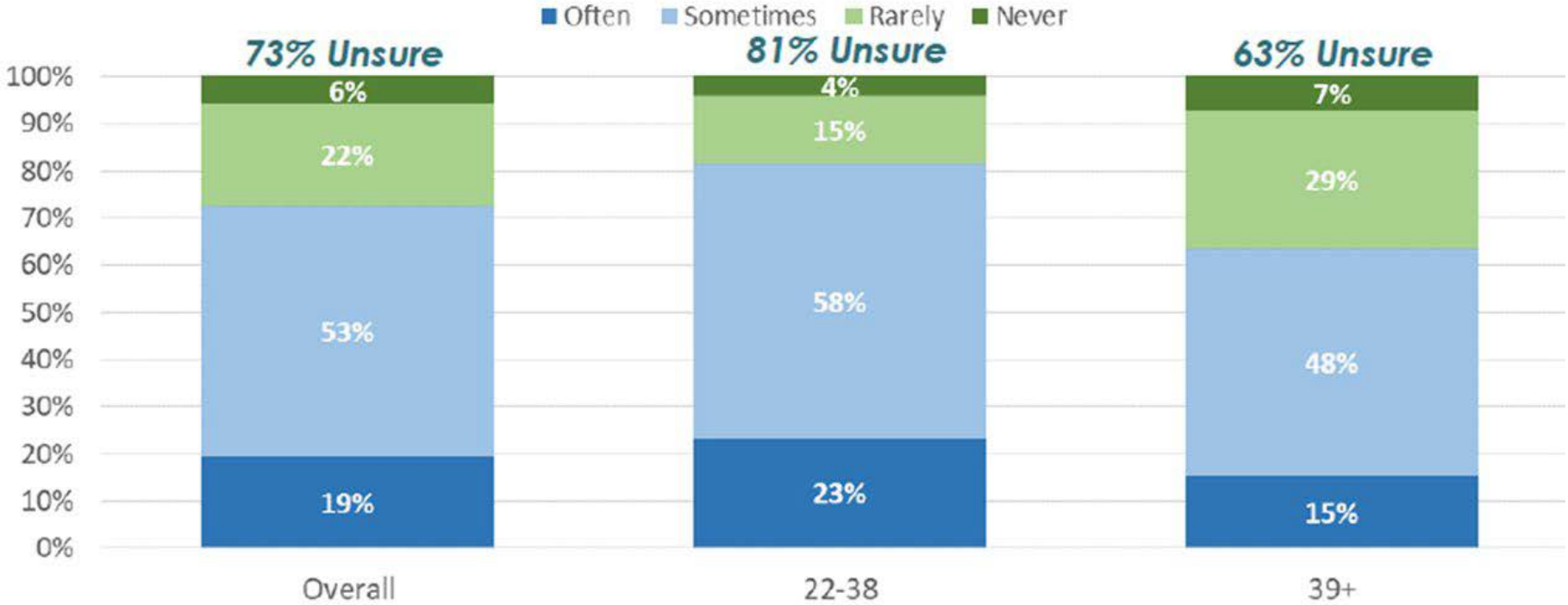
The diversion trap

- Counting all the stuff **collected in recycling bins as being recycled** including the stuff that was landfilled or burned here or in the countries where it was shipped to be recycled.
- The goal was to **collect** more material for recycling and increase our recycling rates.
- As a result we didn't collect data on **“real” recycling** or on the growing levels of contamination.

Roots causes of contamination

Consumer Confusion, Doubt, and Good Intentions

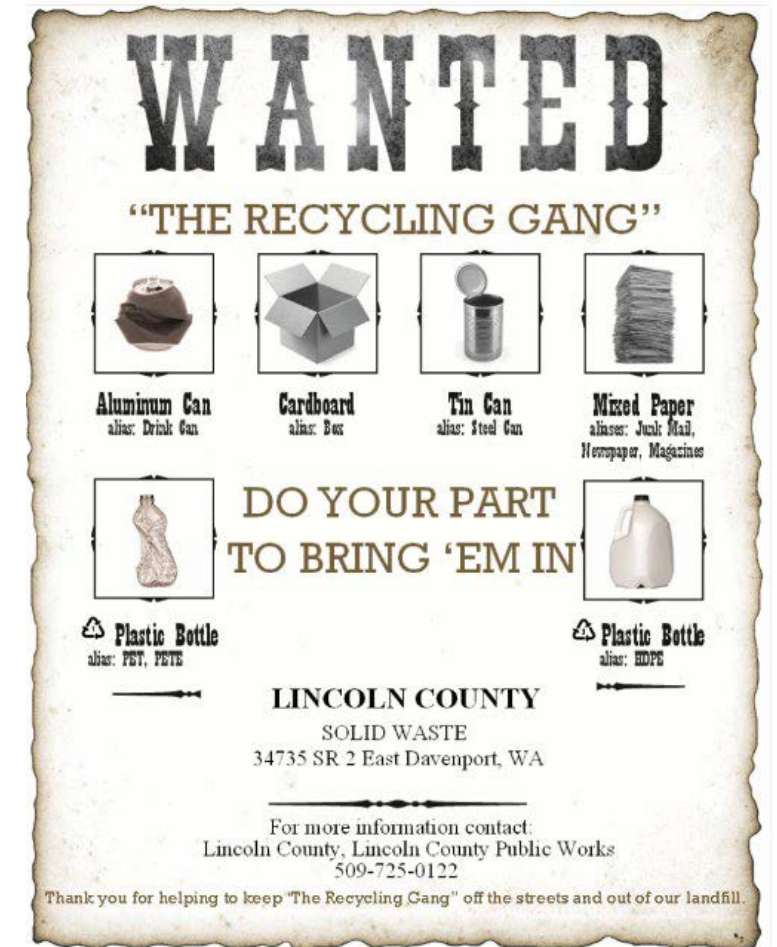
HOW UNSURE ARE YOU ABOUT WHAT IS RECYCLABLE?



The Harmonization Choir

Growing agreement on a priority set of materials and the need for harmonization of policies and messaging

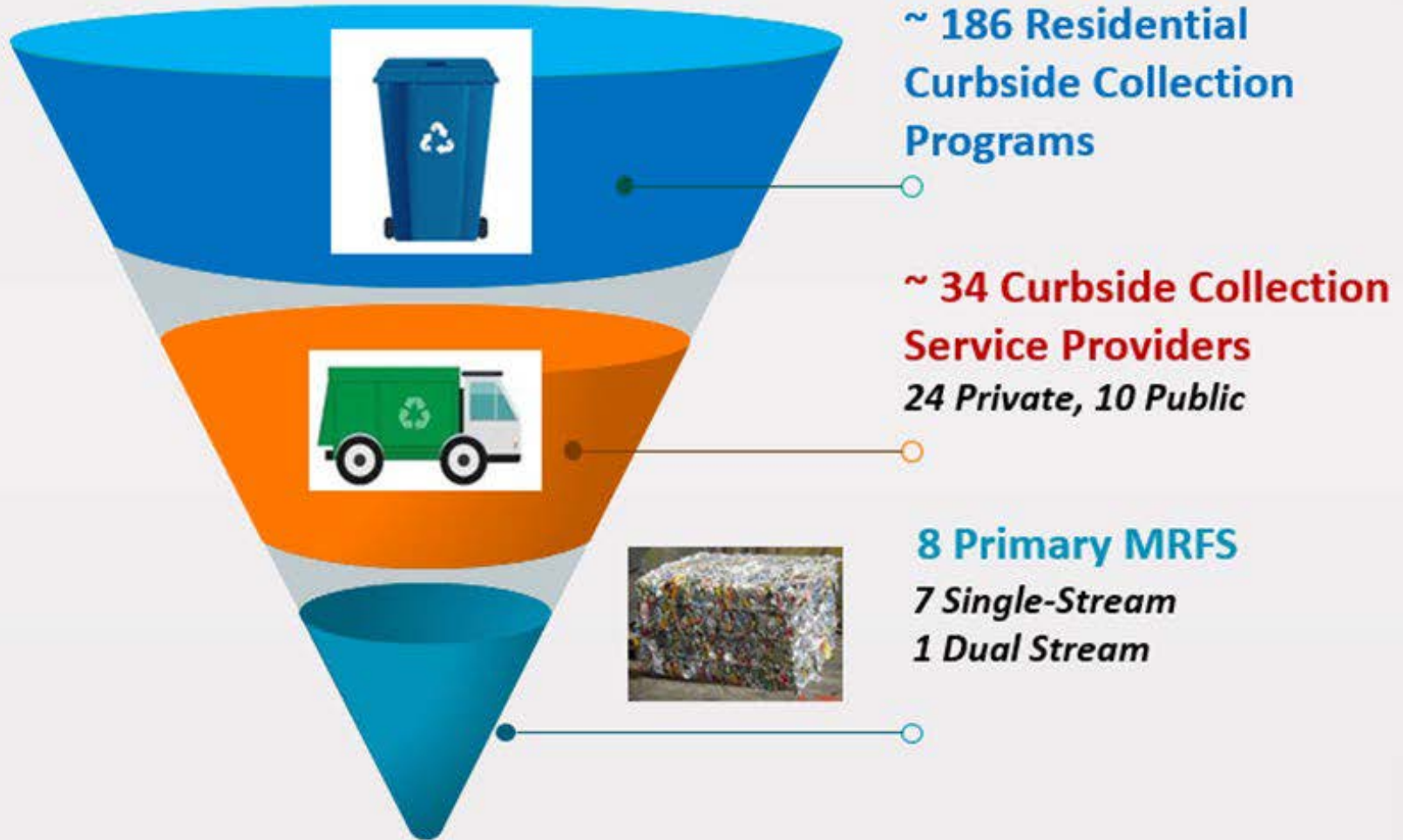
- **Paper** (including office and notebook paper, newspaper, mail, catalogues, magazines, and cereal or cracker boxes)
- **Cardboard**
- **Plastic Bottles and Jugs** (clear, colored, and natural)
- **Steel and Aluminum Cans**



The Harmonization Choir

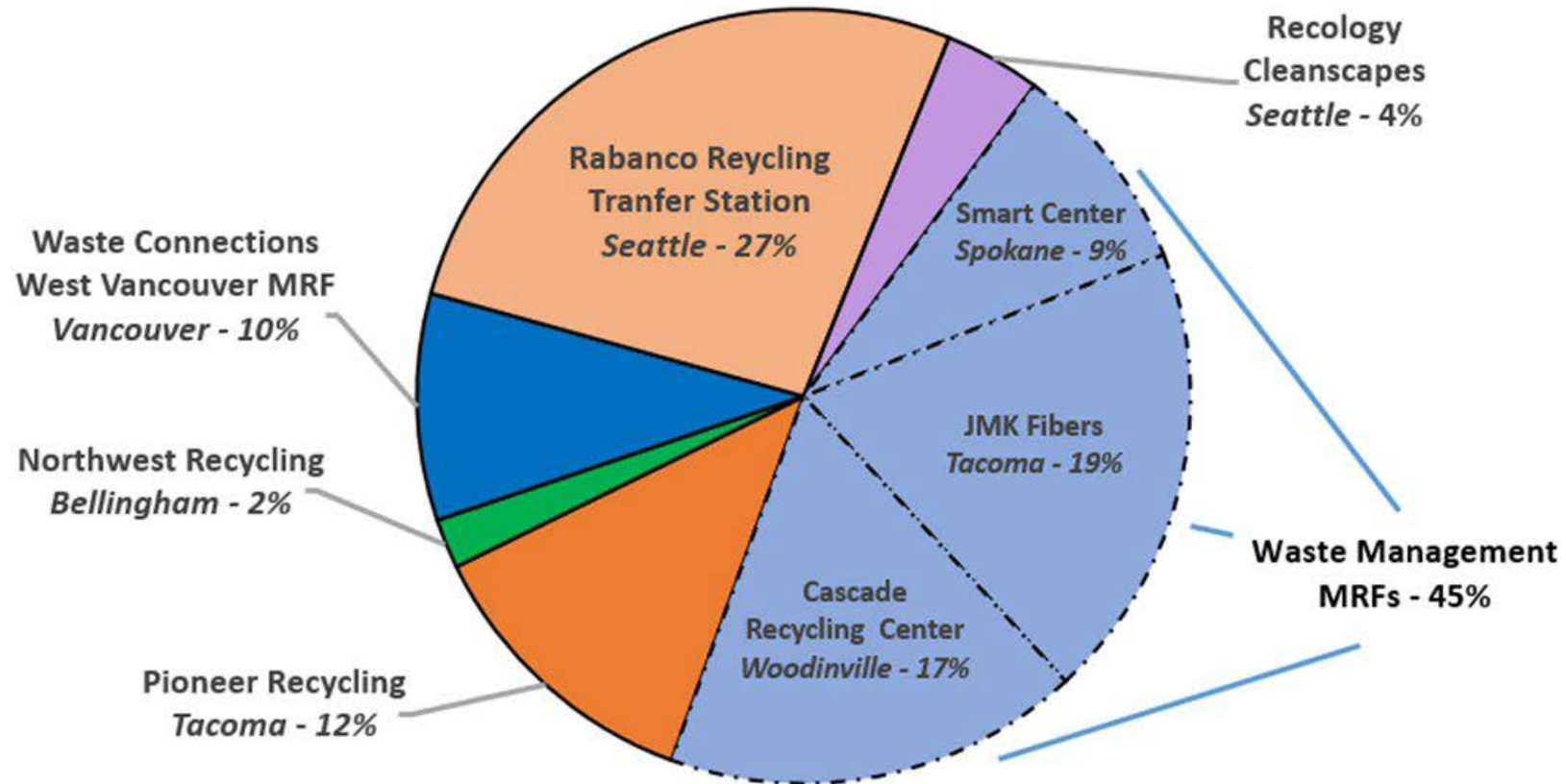
- **Department of Ecology** - *BMPs & Recycle Right Campaign*
- **Washington Association of Counties Solid Waste Management Affiliates** - *Commingled Recycling Guidelines*
- **Washington State Refuse and Recycling Association** - *List of suggested materials to include in commingled programs.*
- **King County Responsible Recycling Task Force** - *Framework calls for regional policy alignment and harmonized messaging.*

The Funneling of Curbside Recycling in Washington State



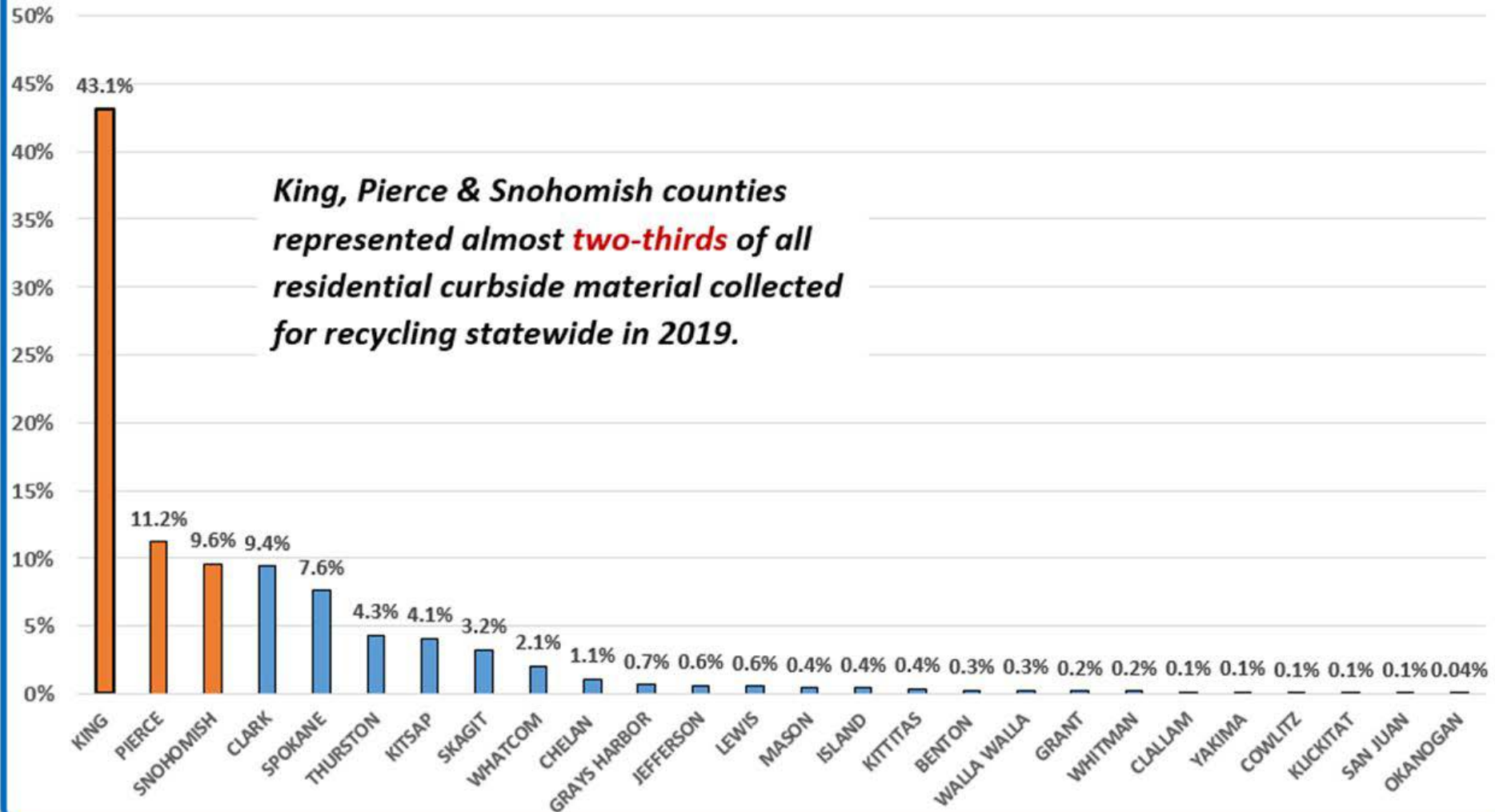
Washington State Curbside Residential Recycling Material

% Processed by Material Recovery Facility in 2019

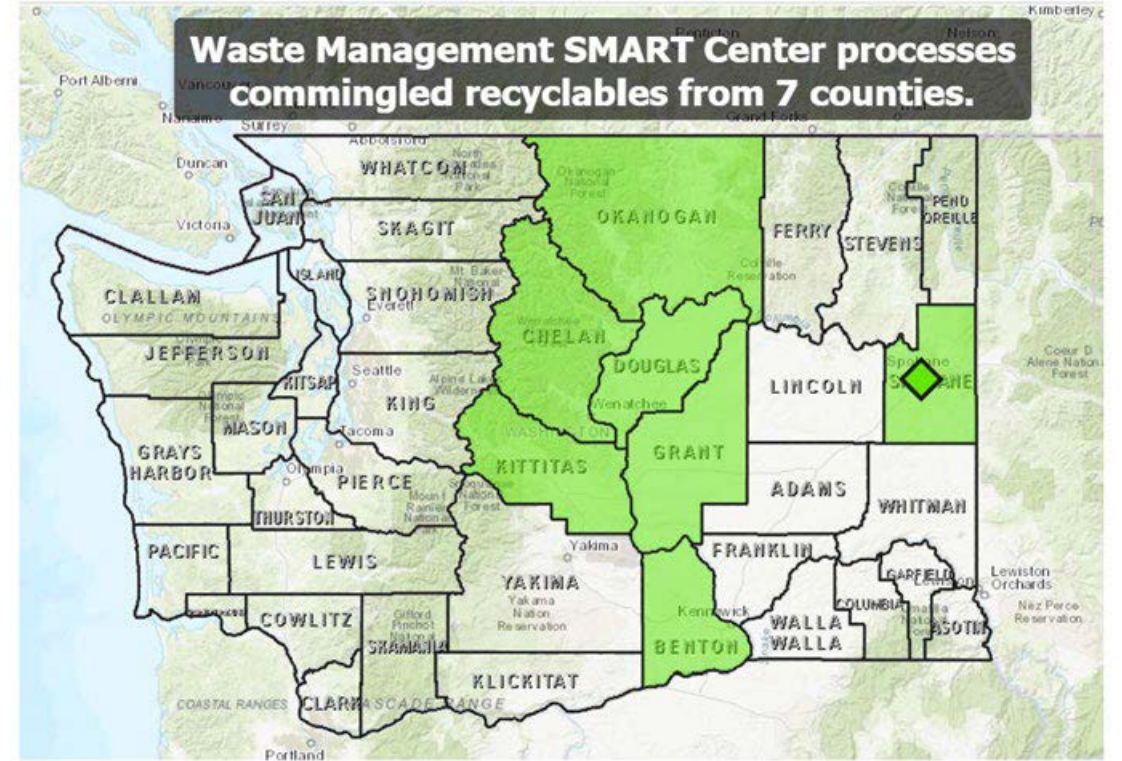
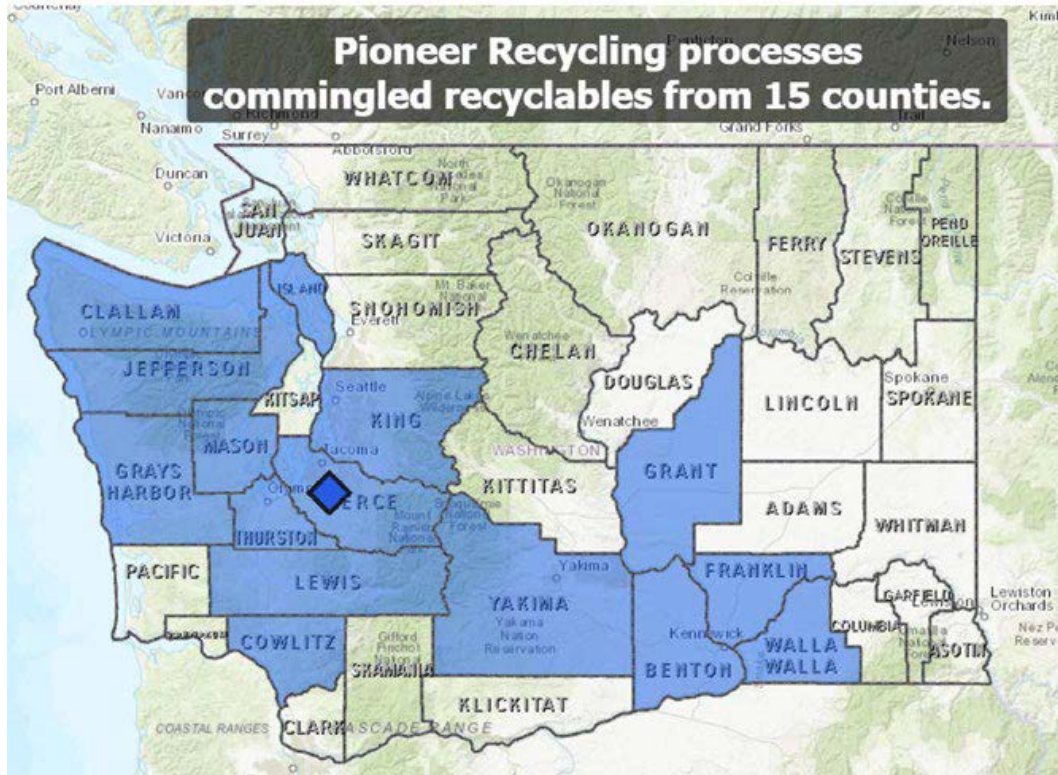


Washington State Curbside Residential Recycling Material

% Collected by County in 2019



MRF-shed maps planning



Statewide Action Plan

Creating a cleaner stream

- Promoting alignment and harmonization across recycling programs statewide.
- Encouraging and supporting regional solid waste planning and aligned or joint contracting for services.
- Gathering and sharing more comprehensive data to measure the performance of the recycling system.
- Pursuing legislative, funding, and policy solutions including full funding for the Local Solid Waste Financial Assistance program.

The Local CROP Template

11 Steps to a Cleaner Stream

1. Stakeholder engagement
2. Develop an implementation plan and secure or allocate funding and assistance
3. Inventory current recycling collection services and programs
4. Prioritize the recycling program(s) to focus on first
5. Define what data to collect to determine baseline levels of recycling contamination

The Local CROP Template

11 Steps to a Cleaner Stream

6. Gather baseline recycling contamination data
7. Identify key contaminants and their costs and impacts
8. Establish acceptable materials lists
9. Develop and implement contamination reduction education and outreach strategies
10. Explore contamination reduction strategies beyond education and outreach
11. Evaluate the effectiveness of anti-contamination strategies and set next steps

Contamination Reduction BMPs & Resources

Five focus areas for single-family, multifamily, drop box and commercial recycling programs



Communications & Outreach



Policies & Mandates



Operations & Collection



Measurement & Reporting



Incentives & Pricing

Contamination Reduction BMPs & Resources

Recycling Contamination Reduction Resource Library

Recycling Contamination Reduction Resources

We are just beginning to build our library collection. Most of these initial resources are also included - along with many others - in the references and resources section of the State CROP. This library will allow us to keep those resources up-to-date and expand our collection over time. Some of the most valuable resources in the library are the local program examples that our community and government partners have shared with us. If there are other resources you'd like added to the library, send a note to the CROP librarian, Peter Guttchen at peter.guttchen@ecy.wa.gov.

Welcome to Ecology's Recycling Contamination Reduction Resource Library

On this site, you'll find a plethora of resources to learn more about recycling contamination, its impacts on the recycling system, and tools and strategies you can use to clean up the recycling stream in your community. The site is regularly updated, so please check in now and again to see what's new. If you have any questions about the site or have suggestions on new resources to add to the library, send Peter Guttchen an email at peter.guttchen@ecy.wa.gov.

https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias_1962/37664/recycling_contamination_reduction_resources.aspx

Next Steps

- Public comment closes Monday, August 31 @ 5 pm.
- State CROP published – September, 2020 - *expected by the week of September 13. Timing will depend on the comments Ecology receives.*
- Ongoing enhancement to BMPs and CROP Resource Library.
- Ongoing assistance to local governments by Ecology Planners and Recycling Coordinators to develop and implement local CROPs.

Tell us what you think!

**eComments is the way
to have your say...**

and have it officially recorded

<http://swm.ecology.commentinput.com/?id=SueWk>

Get in touch...

Peter Guttchen

Statewide Lead Planner

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564-999-3289 - cell

Stay informed...

Join our **CROP** [email list](#).

Thank you!