

RCW 70A.205.720 Development of standards for the management of compostable products—Process—Report to the legislature—Stakeholder advisory committee. (Expires July 1, 2028.) (1)(a) Legislation enacted in 2022, chapter 180, Laws of 2022, contains numerous provisions intended to decrease the generation of methane gas in landfills from organic materials, by increasing the diversion of organic materials to compost and other organic materials management facilities. The legislature finds that there is urgency in the state's efforts to ensure that compost streams are limited to compostable organic materials and are not hindered by unsuitable contaminants. At present, organic materials management facilities in Washington vary in the types of feedstocks that are accepted.

(b) The department must contract with an independent third-party facilitator to convene a stakeholder advisory committee. The advisory committee shall make recommendations to the appropriate committees of the legislature on the development of standards for the management of compostable products, especially food service products, by composting and other organic materials management facilities.

(2) In developing recommendations, the stakeholder advisory committee must, at a minimum, consider:

(a) The state's goals of managing organic materials, including food waste, in an environmentally sustainable way that increases food waste diversion and ensures that finished compost is clean and marketable, with the intent of being consistent with and furthering the improvements identified in chapter 180, Laws of 2022;

(b) The types of compostable products, and amounts if known, sold or distributed into Washington;

(c) Consumer confusion caused by noncompostable products that can lead to contamination issues;

(d) Compostable standards related to the breakdown of products in facilities and home composting;

(e) The status of acceptance of compostable products by organic materials management facilities in Washington, including consideration of organic certifications;

(f) Estimates of the percentage of compostable products used in Washington that are disposed of at organic materials management facilities;

(g) Financial incentives for organic materials management facilities accepting compostable products;

(h) Current laws related to compostable products and the enforcement of these laws;

(i) Any work product from other contemporaneous stakeholder advisory committees currently discussing similar topics in other jurisdictions or nationwide; and

(j) Policy options addressing contamination of organic waste streams and to increase the use of reusable and refillable items.

(3) The facilitator selected in subsection (1) of this section must:

(a) Hire subcontractors, as needed, for the research of any relevant information regarding issues associated with compostable products and the management of compostable materials in composting and other organic materials management facilities;

(b) Provide staff and support to the stakeholder advisory committee meetings; and

(c) Draft reports and other materials for review by the stakeholder advisory committee.

(4) The facilitator shall submit a report to the legislature by September 15, 2024, containing the recommendations of the stakeholder advisory committee after review and approval by the facilitator and committee. The department and its hired facilitator must convene the first stakeholder meeting by September 15, 2023, and must convene meetings at least monthly thereafter through January, on a schedule developed in consultation with the stakeholders serving on the advisory committee. All meetings of the stakeholder advisory committee must be held in a virtual format. The stakeholder advisory committee shall make recommendations using consensus-based decision making. The report must include recommendations where general stakeholder consensus has been achieved and note dissenting opinions where stakeholder consensus has not been achieved.

(5) The department must select at least one member to the stakeholder advisory committee from each of the following:

(a) Cities, including both small and large cities and cities located in urban and rural counties, which may be represented by an association that represents cities in Washington;

(b) Counties, including both small and large counties and urban and rural counties, which may be represented by an association that represents county solid waste managers in Washington;

(c) Municipal collectors or companies that provide curbside organic materials management services under a municipal contract under RCW 35.21.120;

(d) A solid waste collection company regulated under chapter 81.77 RCW that provides curbside organic materials collection services;

(e) Three organic materials management facility operators, including at least one operator of a facility that does not currently accept compostable food service products and one operator of a facility that does currently accept such products;

(f) A representative from an environmental nonprofit organization that specializes in waste and recycling issues;

(g) Two manufacturers of compostable products, including at least one manufacturer of compostable food service products and one manufacturer of compostable plastic food service products;

(h) One distributor of compostable food service products;

(i) A statewide general business trade association;

(j) A representative from a retail grocery association;

(k) Two organizations that act as third-party certifiers of compostable products;

(l) The department of agriculture;

(m) Two associations focused on organic materials recycling or composting; and

(n) A statewide organization representing hospitality businesses.

(6) In addition to the members selected under subsection (5) of this section, the director must invite participation on the stakeholder advisory committee from any federally recognized Indian tribe that expresses interest in participation to the department prior to September 1, 2023.

(7) This section expires July 1, 2028. [2023 c 236 § 1.]