



# Recycling Steering Committee

*Modernizing Oregon's recycling system with support from Oregon Consensus*

## Modernizing Oregon's Recycling System — Recycling Steering Committee Charter, 10/15/19

### Background

For several years, Oregon and the rest of the world have relied on China to take much of the recyclable paper and plastics generated by residents and businesses. In fact, up to 60 percent of the world's recycling went to China. For Oregon, sending materials to China was due to the loss of local markets, the low cost of shipping materials to China, and China's acceptance of materials that often contained higher levels of contamination than U.S. markets would accept. In January 2018, the Chinese government banned the import of certain plastic and paper grades and set a much tighter contamination standard for paper (0.5 percent by weight). The loss of China's markets has disrupted recycling systems worldwide, and in Oregon, communities are making changes to their recycling programs in response including raising utility rates, suspending recycling, removing items from programs or in rare cases disposing of materials collected for recycling. Read more on the Recycling Markets page.

Collaboration and partnerships will be important throughout this process as the recycling systems are diverse and involve many players. In May 2018, DEQ formed the Recycling Steering Committee with partner representatives and launched a planning process to modernize Oregon's recycling systems so they are stronger and more resilient to market changes.

### Purpose of the Recycling Steering Committee

The SC will work together to examine and make recommendations for modernizing recycling system in Oregon, in order to:

- Optimize the environmental benefits of managing materials at the end of life using a life-cycle perspective.
- Create a recovery system that is strong and resilient to changes in supply and demand.
- Restore and maintain public trust in the system through education and engagement with the public.

Throughout this work, the steering committee will look to balance the needs of different parts of the state and any significant geographical differences.

The SC will also look to balance solutions for sustainable materials management at the end-of-life that do not compromise or hinder efforts to reduce environmental impacts at other stages of the life cycle such as product design, manufacturing, delivery or use. The SC will look for opportunities to further integrate Oregon's 2050 Oregon's 2050 Vision — the state's plan for managing recycling systems and more including:

### Upstream, design and production:

The Recycling Steering Committee is a collaborative of representation from the Assoc. of Oregon Counties, Assoc. of Oregon Recyclers, Assoc. of Plastics Recyclers/Denton Plastics, EFI Recycling, Far West Recycling, Lane County, League of Oregon Cities, Metro, NORPAC, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Refuse & Recycling Assoc., City of Portland, The Recycling Partnership, Rogue Disposal & Recycling, Waste Connections, and Waste Management. **For more information, visit <https://go.usa.gov/xmYYe>.**

- Producers make products sustainably.
- Materials are not used at a rate faster than can be renewed or recovered.
- Research and innovation fuel unprecedented technological advances and economic vitality in Oregon.
- Coordination throughout the life cycle of products leads to innovated solutions.
- Complete and transparent information on product contents and life-cycle impacts is readily available.
- Responsibility is shared for full life-cycle impacts.

### **Consumption and use:**

- All Oregonians live well in communities where materials are used sustainably.
- Oregonians actively seek to live within the limits of our sustainable share of the world's natural resources.
- Sustainable product and material choices are desired and readily available.
- Complete product and environmental information is accurate and readily available.

### **End-of-life management:**

- Materials have a useful life after discard.
- Stable infrastructure and markets support highest and best use of discarded materials.
- Oregonians are engage in making better materials choices for end-of-life management of materials.
- Health and environmental risks from disposed wastes are minimized.
- Public policies support sustainable materials management at product end of life.

### **Potential outcomes**

Outcomes include recommendations for:

- List of materials for collection programs with an understanding of environmental and economic impacts and understanding of regional differences
- Optimal collection methods that can supply clean materials and are cost-effective
- Models for materials sorting and processing infrastructure for the state and region including facilities, processes and technology that can effectively and efficiently sort and market recyclable materials
- Governance structures that are the most effective at supporting Oregon's recycling systems
- Effective education materials and enforcement methods that encourage residents and businesses to recycle correctly and reduce contamination
- Markets development strategies

### **Guiding principles**

- Policies and programs are based on research
- Coordinate and collaborate with partners

- Ensure actions complement one another
- Build on what’s already working, using existing infrastructure when possible
- Focus on high impact materials and processes that support environmental benefits
- Be flexible and adaptable to new materials coming in to the system.
- Consider socially responsible policy options that address Social equity, quality of life, economic viability and unintended consequences.

## Members

The SC is chaired by DEQ and comprised of representatives of partners who will collaborate to identify and implement changes needed in Oregon’s recycling systems. Representatives from Association of Oregon Counties, Association of Oregon Recyclers, DEQ, League of Oregon Cities, Metro, and the Oregon Refuse and Recycling Association chose fifteen experienced stakeholders to be on the SC.

Members include:

### Government representatives

- Assoc. of Oregon Counties (Deschutes County) — Timm Schimke – Bend
- City of Portland — Bruce Walker – Portland
- DEQ — David Allaway/Abby Boudouris (chair) – Portland
- Lane County — Sarah Grimm – Eugene
- League of Oregon Cities (City of Beaverton) — Scott Keller – Beaverton
- Metro — Pam Peck – Portland

- Paper industry — Jay Simmons, NORPAC
- Plastics industry — Nicole Janssen, Association of Plastics Recyclers/Denton Plastics
- Rogue Disposal & Recycling — Laura Leebrick – Medford
- Waste Connections — Jason Hudson – Vancouver, Wash.
- Waste Management — Matt Stern – Kirkland, Wash.

### Recycling industry representatives

- EFI — Jeff Murray – Portland
- Far West Recycling — Vinod Singh – Portland
- Oregon Refuse and Recycling Assoc. — Kristan Mitchell – Salem

### Other association representatives

- Assoc. of Oregon Recyclers — Amy Roth — Tualatin
- Recycling Partnership — Dylan de Thomas — Portland

## Recycling Steering Committee process and procedures

Generally, the SC will follow a process to identify and define problems:

1. Gather relevant information to inform decisions.
2. Brainstorm and deliberate solutions.
3. Use a collaborative, consensus-based process to identify and implement changes.

Problem definition: Within the defined broad goals identified in the 2050 Vision, the SC will determine which problems it will seek to solve, and explore stressors and opportunities to address them.

Gather information: The SC will provide input to DEQ to identify foundational research and lean on the expertise of SC members to inform the SC's work. The SC will feed information to subcommittees to work deeper on issues.

Brainstorm and deliberate: Informed by the above, subcommittees and the SC will develop a list of potential options for addressing problems and work toward achieving the outcomes.

Identify and implement changes: The SC will formulate recommendations and develop implementation plans.

### **Decision-making**

The SC will strive for consensus on policy recommendations to revamp Oregon's recycling. Consensus is defined as, "willingness to accept the group's recommendation." The group will utilize a "five-finger" approach to gauge the level of agreement on a given proposal. Members will indicate their level of support by showing one or more fingers:

- One finger indicates enthusiastic support.
- Two fingers indicates support.
- Three fingers indicates willingness to go along but some questions or on the fence.
- Four fingers indicates willingness to go along but serious questions and concerns.
- Five fingers indicates a block to consensus.

If a member is at a "four" or "five" they will offer explanation and a proposal to move them up to a higher level of agreement. If there is no more time for the group to deliberate on a particular proposal, anyone who blocks consensus will write a rationale for the dissent and offer one or more alternative proposals. SC members will be informed in advance of all meetings at which a proposal or recommendation will be up for consensus and SC members will make every effort to attend the meeting in person, be on the phone, or send an alternate with the authority to act on behalf of the organization they represent. . SC members can share their perspective by email at least one week prior to the meeting.

### **Communications**

The facilitation team will share meeting summaries that will document significant issues raised during the discussions, whether and how the issues were resolved, committee recommendations, and other action items. These meeting summaries will be posted on the DEQ project website.

Committee records, such as formal documents, discussion drafts, meeting summaries and exhibits are public records. Committee communications are not confidential and may be disclosed. However, the private documents of individual committee members generally are not considered public records if DEQ or another public body does not use or retain copies.

DEQ will be the point of contact with the public and media about meetings, agenda topics and general progress. DEQ will attempt to coordinate in advance and seek input from the SC on what, when and how communication will occur. All media inquiries should be directed to the DEQ media contact: Unless delegated specifically to do so by the DEQ and the SC, members should not speak on behalf of the group.

## **Participation guidelines**

All committee members commit to:

- Participate in each meeting to the best of your abilities to ensure continuity throughout the process. Avoid substituting or alternating members whenever possible.
- Come prepared for meetings by reading materials prior to the meeting, thinking through questions and developing responses and discussion ideas
- Engage in honest, open-minded, constructive and good-faith discussions to seek understanding and optimal decisions and outcomes.
- Treat everyone and their opinions with respect.
- Share air time with peers. . Employ the WAIT (Why Am I Talking?) rule after you have spoken on a topic. Comment constructively and specifically
- Consult regularly with your particular constituencies and provide input to the discussions from those constituencies.
- Operate according to, and stay focused on, the committee's specific charge.
- Do not attempt to represent the views of the SC as a whole to the public except as clearly agreed upon and delegated to do so.

## **Alternative formats**

For questions about accessibility or to request an accommodation, please call 503-229-5696, or toll-free in Oregon at 1-800-452-4011, ext. 5696. Requests should be made at least 48 hours prior to the event. Documents can be provided upon request in an alternate format for individuals with disabilities or in a language other than English for people with limited English skills. To request a document in another format or language, call DEQ in Portland at 503-229-5696, or toll-free in Oregon at 1-800-452-4011, ext. 5696; or email [deqinfo@deq.state.or.us](mailto:deqinfo@deq.state.or.us).