

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL SOLID WASTE COMMITTEE
OF THE METROPOLITAN SERVICE DISTRICT

July 31, 1990

Council Chamber

Committee Members Present: Tom DeJardin (Chair), Judy Wyers (Vice Chair), Roger Buchanan

Committee Members Absent: Tanya Collier, David Saucy

Chair DeJardin called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

1. Workshop to Discuss Solid Waste Legislation

Chair Tom DeJardin explained that the sole item on the agenda was to discuss solid waste legislation that could be supported by Metro; either legislation that Metro had in mind to submit to the State Legislature or ideas from the public seeking Metro's support. He said markets needed to be provided for recycled materials; he noted that the One Percent For Recycling Committee had been discussing this and directing alot of energy into this.

The Plastics Recycling Task Force, consisting of Corky Kirkpatrick, Chair, Jerry Herrmann, Sara Vickerman, Victor Bitar, Russell Broynier, Patrick Moffatt and Dennis Denton were introduced. Ms. Kirkpatrick said the first issue was to have plastics designated as a principal recyclable. She said that Mr. Herrmann had compiled a list that included the things Chair DeJardin asked them to put together for an overview.

Ms. Vickerman pointed out that the Metro Council did endorse House Bill 3842 last year which established the Oregon Resource Conservation Trust Fund. She said that this Bill had passed except for a funding mechanism. It established the Trust Fund in two parts: 1) the habitat conservation account which has a board that oversees the site process. The purpose of this site was to protect wildlife habitat and provide recreational opportunities in conjunction with those lands and to provide environmental education programs; and 2) on the solid waste side, the Bill required that the DEQ do a state-wide assessment for the need to improve recycling programs in Oregon.

Ms. Vickerman went on to say that the DEQ had initiated this process by sending out questionnaires to all wastesheds and asked questions of the business community and environmental organizations to determine what could be done to improve recycling in Oregon. This material was being evaluated by a committee and the document should be completed soon.

When the Task Force came to the Committee last time they were asking for three quarters of one percent surcharge on packaging to finance this Trust Fund. They are still looking at that option with about a half a dozen others. They are working with an Interim Committee and revenue

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and school finance and the business community to select the most appropriate and politically feasible funding mechanism for this program. She stated that they would appreciate Metro's continued support on their efforts to get funding and would also appreciate making this a legislative priority.

Chair DeJardin asked who sponsored this legislation the last time. Ms. Vickerman said there were quite a few sponsors; Bruce Hugo was a primary sponsor and there were approximately 31 sponsors in the House and 27 in the Senate.

Councilor Buchanan expressed concern about the styrofoam ban passed by the City Council because the Bill to make plastics a principal recyclable seemed to contradict the ban. Ms. Vickerman said she would support making plastics a primary recyclable because that was the means by which materials got into the curbside recycling program in Oregon. She said the Opportunity to Recycle Act was based on the assumption that these materials pay for themselves, and in reality very few of them did. Since the markets fluctuated so much they may qualify at one time and not at another, and/or work in one watershed and not in another. She said alot of the plastics are at least as comparable to the volume of mixed waste paper and newspaper as far as cost effectiveness to recycle them.

Ms. Vickerman said the Nature Conservancy did an extensive poll based on the interest in getting the Trust Fund financed. One of the questions on recycling was "even if the materials recycled do not pay for themselves, should we recycle them anyway?" She said the overwhelming response from the public was yes, even if it were necessary to increase garbage fees, add a packaging tax or increase the deposit on returnable bottles and keep the difference to finance the land acquisition and recycling programs.

Councilor Buchanan said that he toured the Denton Plastics facility and that it was his perception that by banning the use of styrofoam that we were going the wrong direction. Mr. Herrmann replied that it was clear to him that the industry was taking steps to totally eliminate the use of even partially halogenated gases as well as fully halogenated CFC's. He said only food grade foam had been dealt with but other sources of polystyrene had not. He noted that in the public's mind the CFC and wildlife issues had been solved because the food grade foam had been dealt with, but that it really hadn't. He said the effort being placed to recover the material was expensive and required subsidy but currently every market was being subsidized.

Councilor Buchanan said that he felt there may be a conflict with the City's ordinance. Councilor Wyers said that the ban was only on the food containers and there was still alot of other materials such as packaging and pellets that were not specifically banned in the City, so

it could still go on as a principal recyclable even though in some uses it was banned within the City limits.

Dennis Denton said that there was a dire need for more public and private partnerships and they should be sought after. He complimented Metro for doing that with the Reidel Compost Facility and Rabanco. Ms. Vickerman stated that the Trust Fund would encourage more public and private partnerships to invest in the research/development application and improvement of the infrastructure for Oregon's recycling.

Chair DeJardin asked how much money would be accumulated in one year from the three-fourths of one percent surcharge on packaging. Ms. Vickerman stated that it would be about \$50 million annually. She envisioned the amounts to be divided as follows: half to build the principal of the Trust Fund on both the habitat and the solid waste side; \$10-12 million going into recycling; \$10-12 million for land conservation; and after 10-12 years, depending on some factors, the funds should reach \$300 million at which time the surcharge could be eliminated and the interest could be used to finance these projects. Chair DeJardin asked what the primary impact would be if it became law. Ms. Vickerman said on the land conservation side, Oregon has no comprehensive approach to habitat protection. This Bill requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife to do a comprehensive habitat protection plan and the Trust Fund would finance the implementation of that plan. On the solid waste side what they hoped this Bill will do is stimulate the development of markets for recycled materials.

Ms. Kirkpatrick said she had two other Bills from the last legislature she would like to review. The first was a coding Bill that would identify the type of plastic which would make it easier to separate. The industry has already adopted this principle and this would make it the law in Oregon. The other Bill was a labeling concept. The Task Force recommended a type of label on plastics such as one that is screen printed or a compatible piece of plastic to avoid the expensive process of removing the paper labels.

In further comment, Vic Bitar discussed the vision that the leadership in this area should be consistent with what was feasible and what was reasonable. He stated that he felt banning styrofoam was the wrong solution. Mr. Bitar said that it was very important to assist in developing markets and educating the public. He commented that Metro had done a very good job in communicating with the public through the Recycling Information Center and through the One Percent For Recycling Program. He said that the Northwest was nationally recognized as a leading region on environmental concerns. Therefore, whatever legislation that was sought should be done with the national level in mind. He felt that the message from the City ban was sending a signal to the industry to shape up or face the consequences which they were not going to like. He felt that the industry had done too little, too late

and that maybe this was good for them to learn, but that the industry needed signals that were within reason.

Mr. Herrmann discussed the attached Metro Legislative Concepts. He stated that items 1-6 all had support.

Chair DeJardin opened the public hearing.

Rob Guttridge, 815 Washington Street, Oregon City, Oregon, spoke on behalf of the Recycling Advocates. They had endorsed the Oregon Recycling Initiative being proposed by OSPIRG and would also like Metro's endorsement. He said if it were not possible for Metro to support that initiative, then they would like to have support for an expansion of the existing Bottle Bill to include all beverage containers. Another issue was the gap in SB 405 which had a weakness in multi-family residences. They would support legislation that would require landlords whose service to their tenants included garbage collection to also provide recycling collection for the principal recyclables. He went on to say that this could potentially include commercial tenants.

Peter Green, Administrator of the Joint Environment and Hazardous Materials Committee, Salem, Oregon, mentioned that Senator Springer had been at the meeting but had to leave but Senator Springer had asked him to make some comments for him. Mr. Green stated that Senator Springer and Representative Ron Cease chair the full committee and sub committee that are working on the Solid Waste Bill. The goal of the sub committee was to put forth a major piece of solid waste legislation for the next session and it was in the drafting stage right now. Marketing and development and promoting local recycling are the main parts of the Bill and they both needed funding. He said he hoped that Metro would work cooperatively with the Legislature and the State to try to find funding for these programs. Secondly, Senator Springer also would like Metro to work cooperatively with the DEQ in their drafting process. He thinks that both agencies have exactly the same goals even though they represent slightly different constituencies. Lastly, Mr. Green said that Senator Springer also would like to emphasize that he hopes that whatever came out of the Committee that it would be based on the best public policy decision and not based on politics.

Councilor Wyers expressed her concern about the definition of the word recycling and asked Mr. Green if their Bill addressed that language. Mr. Green said that currently the Bill was in outline form and did not; however, he would be meeting with legal counsel soon and it may be looked into. Chair DeJardin asked Mr. Green to assure Senator Springer of the Council's willingness to work not only with the DEQ but also with the Joint Committee to put together some very good public policies.