

FY 2023-24 Budget Note #3: Plastics Reduction

Create a special initiative to identify ways to improve plastics reuse and recycling. It would be an approximately 18-month effort and would involve both new technology and regional, national, and international research into options and cost/benefit, best practices specifically managing lifecycle GHG, daily life microplastic, and ocean gyre impacts. It would include an estimate of volume of each waste stream in greater Portland and potentially identify additional legal/legislative tools and long-term landfill impacts.

Activities to Date

Reuse, Lifecycle GHG

- Plastic recycling and reuse projects funded by Metro Innovation and Investment Grants
- New DEQ reuse program (MIRROR) funded by the Recycling Modernization Act (RMA)
- In 2023, the Metro-supported SB 545 legalized reusables in restaurants.

Recyclables

The RMA will update Oregon's recycling system to increase plastic recovery and address the challenges of reducing manufacture, use, disposal, and littering of plastic.

Toxics

The toxics reduction program promotes safer personal care products and reducing single-use plastic packaging. The campaign encourages opting for refillable products with those with no or less packaging.

Microplastics

Metro is pursuing an EPA Solid Waste Infrastructure earmark to offset the costs of purchasing a food waste de-packager for Metro Central Transfer Station. A de-packager is a large machine that removes contaminants, such as microplastics, from food waste loads.

Oceanic Impacts

Metro has supported and many successful plastics-related state bills. See attachment.

Future Activities

WPES continues implementing the Regional Waste Plan, RMA, and supporting efforts to expand producer responsibility and reduce the proliferation of single-use plastics locally and nationally.

Metro staff will continue to provide regular updates on plastics-related work to Councilors in briefings and at work sessions, when appropriate.

These future activities are consistent with the feedback received from the budget note sponsor.

Budget

No budget impacts. Staff used existing resources to implement the budget note direction.