

December 2017

**The Honorable Jay Inslee**

Governor

**The Honorable Christine Rolfes**

Chair

Senate Ways & Means Committee

**The Honorable David Frockt**

Vice-Chair

Senate Capital Budget Committee

**The Honorable Timm Ormsby**

Chair

House Appropriations Committee

**The Honorable Steve Tharinger**

Chair

House Capital Budget Committee

**The Honorable Kristine Lytton**

Chair

House Finance Committee

**The Honorable John Braun**

Ranking Member

Senate Ways & Means Committee

**The Honorable Jim Honeyford**

Assistant Ranking Member on the Capital Budget

Senate Capital Budget Committee

**The Honorable Bruce Chandler**

Ranking Member

House Appropriations Committee

**The Honorable Richard DeBolt**

Ranking Member

House Capital Budget Committee

**The Honorable Terry Nealey**

Ranking Member

House Finance Committee

**RE: Waste Reduction Recycling and Litter Control Account (WRRLCA) budget**

Dear Honorable Governor, Chairs and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations collectively representing a wide breadth of the retail and recycling industry in Washington, we are writing to express our support for restoring funds to Ecology's Waste Reduction Recycling and Litter Control Account (WRRLCA) budget in the 2019 supplemental budget. Together, we represent: grocers; retailers; city, county and state government staff; non-profit organizations; recycling and solid waste companies; compost processors; green builders; colleges and universities.

In the 2017-2019 budget, \$10 million in litter tax was once again diverted for the general operation of Washington State Parks. The litter tax was passed in 1971 with broad support and applies to sales of commonly littered items. Industry agreed to this tax to ensure money was available to help our environment by picking up the waste from the taxed items. Since 2008, almost half the money from the Waste Reduction Recycling and Litter Control Account has been

taken for other purposes and is not being used for the intended waste reduction and litter pickup. This has resulted in increased litter on our roadways and diminished support for local recycling and composting programs.

In 2015, the legislature passed the Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1060 to make sure the litter tax would go toward its intended purpose. The language in that bill clearly states the diversion to Parks would sunset in 2017 and the 2017-19 budget would not include the transfer of dollars. Legislators unanimously voted for this provision, yet the promise was not kept, and money continues to be diverted.

As organizations who are either being taxed, or who promote recycling and composting in the state of Washington, we are concerned about the diversion of these funds and the impact on our state's environment of continuing to not fund important litter pick up, recycling, and composting programs. Without the necessary money in the WRRLCA program:

- DOE and local governments will no longer be able to support litter pickup programs which provide community jobs for youth and correctional facilities;
- Increased litter along roadways will negatively impact our state's water quality and tourism;
- Efficiencies and critical natural resource conservation will be negatively impacted due to a lack of recycling, composting, and reuse programs.
- Wildlife in Washington state could be harmed by litter left in areas that are ecologically sensitive.

We know you face many important budget priorities. However, we cannot overlook the necessity of a clean and healthy environment for our residents and local economy.

We urge you to uphold both the original law and the bill passed in 2015 and by allowing the litter tax to support the work it was intended to. Please return the balance of the diverted litter tax fund in the 2018 supplemental budget to the waste reduction and recycling programs at DOE and remove the diversion language from the budget. Attached are supporting documents to show the harm these diversions have done to our communities and state highways

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to your response. Thank you again for your leadership on our state's budget.

Sincerely,