

NEWS RELEASE

July 21, 2009

**MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
411 NORTH 5TH ST
SHELTON, WA 98584**

TO: KMAS, KRXY, SHELTON-MASON COUNTY JOURNAL, THE OLYMPIAN,
SHELTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NORTH MASON CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE, CITY OF SHELTON, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL,
THE SUN

RE: Letter to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission regarding
Mason County's Recycling Ordinance

In December of 2008, we passed an ordinance making recycling a mandatory part of part of residential collection. This ordinance was developed with our Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC), staff, and Mason County Garbage (MCG). During the initial stage of ordinance development MCG indicated an anticipated rate would be about \$5.00/month for residential service. However, a much smaller service area was the base of the rate projection. After much discussion MCG has expanded the service area for collection but is proposing a rate approaching \$8.00 per customer.

The passage of the mandatory collection for recycling complies with our Solid Waste Management Plan, (chapter 3, recycling, recommendations) and RCW 70.95. As you are aware this model of garbage and curbside recycling has proven to be successful model throughout Washington State and nationally.

In March of this year, the County, MCG and SWAC began work on amendments to the curbside collection ordinance. There were three items, which required code modification. A fourth item was later identified. These proposed changes were discussed at SWAC, with a recommendation to approve all four brought to the Board of County Commissioners:

1. *Code numbers:* this ordinance was filed under Chapter 6 in the County Code. It should be under Chapter 13.
2. *Implementation Schedule:* it was agreed that a new implementation period for curb side recycling would allow MCG to acquire equipment and rearrange routes for collection in a shorter phased approach.
3. *Materials Accepted:* based on drastic changes in the marketability of recycled commodities, dairy tubs were removed from the list of acceptable items for recycling.
4. *Commodity Credit:* Mason County Garbage would be allowed a share of the commodity credit associated with the sale of recycled material.

At a County Commissioner's Hearing to consider these revisions on July 14th, there were several questions and issues that arose that caused us to continue our hearing until August 4, 2009. We are aware that this is after the UTC hearing on MCG rate proposal.

1. Could there be rate for garbage only collection?

2. What happens if an unexpectedly high percentage of current subscribers cancel service- will the remaining participants pay more?
3. Can the rate proposal costs be phased in over a multi-year period?
4. Can the UTC wait on a determination of the rate proposal until our residents have adequate opportunity to express their concerns?
5. The ordinance recommends a financial incentive to customers who recycle. Is this reflected solely in the commodity credit, or are additional incentives possible?
6. Can the UTC's Public Hearing be held in Mason County, where the customers who are affected live?

We are working closely with MCG to try and respond to these questions; any consideration you might in assisting us to answer these questions would be appreciated.

Tim Sheldon
Chair

Lynda Ring Erickson
Commissioner

Ross Gallagher
Commissioner