

The County enacted an ordinance in December of last year. The ordinance states, in a nutshell, that any company collecting garbage from residents will also collect recycling. The intent is to provide the same level of convenience for recycling as for garbage.

Many people have been asking questions about some of the points mentioned in a recent notification letter. Below are some of those questions and answers.

**Everyone pays whether or not they use the service.**

*I don't like being told what to do, and that I have to pay for it. Why?*

This reduces the per-user cost by spreading the cost over a larger group. If only those who wanted it paid, their costs would be at least twice the proposed amount. Imagine if six people in Lake Cushman wanted it, and four more in Tahuya. Now imagine how you would provide collection services for those folks. In studies around the country, mandatory pay, voluntary use has proven to be the most successful strategy. For example, it is the program used in the City of Shelton. Shelton and others have found that people who try the new system find that it works well, and often can reduce the size of can or frequency of collection for their garbage service. Studies have also shown that the majority of people will not try it voluntarily.

**Why should I pay if I don't want it?**

You can opt out of collection services, and be responsible for your own garbage and recycling. The County offers four sites for self-hauled wastes. The sites in Belfair and Shelton are open every day. The sites in Union and Hoodspoint are open Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

**Why should I pay for recycling when I can take it to \_\_\_ for free?**

When you use the blueboxes for recycling, you use your time, your vehicle, your bins and your fuel. The word free means these costs are not factored in, but the costs are real. The value of the materials collected does not offset the costs of fuel, driver time, equipment purchase and maintenance. In addition, anyone who has used the blueboxes knows that items that do not belong are a big problem, and cleaning the sites and the materials is a cost too. The bluebox program is being phased out because of cost to the County. It has been kept alive due to a lack of alternatives. Curbside recycling is not just an alternative, it is the proven most successful method of material recovery and reduced disposal.

**Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC)**

The WUTC is a regulatory agency responsible for setting rates charged by private companies who provide essential services, such as power, water, garbage, phones, etc. When a private company provides a service, they collect a fee. The fees are authorized by the UTC, based on their investigation into the cost proposal. The County does not have any authority to set rates for collection for garbage or recycling.

**What about glass?**

At this time the only sites accepting glass are Wilson Recycling and the Shelton Transfer Station (landfill). By the end of this year, all four County sites and Wilson Recycling will accept glass.