Grays Harbor Awarded Nearly $500-Thousand in Department of Ecology Grants

Local News

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Olympia, WA - The state Department of Ecology (Ecology) recently awarded more than $18.8 million in grant funding to 95 city and county government agencies to support waste reduction and recycling and solid waste enforcement in Washington.Coordinated Prevention Grants (CPG) are given to local governments every two years. The funds help communities manage solid and household hazardous wastes, prevent illegal dumping, and promote recycling and composting programs.The grants receive funding through a tax paid by wholesale distributors of petroleum and other hazardous materials. Washington voters approved the tax in 1988 as part of an initiative to reduce toxic threats.Grays Harbor County Public Works will use a $293,663 grant to collect over 225 tons of household hazardous waste at Aberdeen Transfer Station and used oil and antifreeze collection sites throughout the county over an 18 month period.Grays Harbor County Environmental Health will use a $138,885 grant to provide technical assistance and oversee compliance with local and state waste regulations to 11 solid waste facilities or sites. Staff expects to resolve 100 general solid waste complaints or concerns, and assist in the proper handling of 200 junk vehicles.

Across the state, Ecology awarded 122 grant agreements to city and county governments. The Legislature and Gov. Chris Gregoire approved funding totaling $18.8 million. Grant amounts range from $3,000 to $1.5 million. These grants require a 25 percent match by the local recipients, leveraging more than $25 million to support local programs.Ecology estimates the 2011-13 CPG state and local match allocation will support 393 jobs in Washington state.“These grants give local governments the resources to provide their residents the services they want and expect,” said Laurie Davies, Ecology Waste 2 Resource Program manager. “These are also effective approaches from an economic standpoint. Preventing toxics exposure, reducing wastes, and proper management and disposal are smarter, cheaper and healthier than doing costly cleanups later.”CPG projects protect human health and the environment by reducing citizens’ exposure to hazardous toxics, reducing waste, and promoting energy and resource conservation. For example, collection events have collected more than 19,000 tons of hazardous waste annually for proper and safe disposal. And local health departments have responded to thousands of illegal dump and waste storage complaints to enforce solid waste rules and ensure safe management of wastes.CPG has also helped manage organic wastes, such as yard debris, food scraps and wood waste. Local governments are helping communities reduce disposal and burning of organic material by building regional composting facilities, setting up commercial and residential food waste collection programs and offering yard-waste chipping options. These programs diverted nearly 370,000 tons of organic material from landfills in the past three years.Of the $18.8 million, Ecology awarded $456,946 to14 communities for projects that provide alternatives to burning yard and land-clearing debris. These projects help reduce the effects of smoke emissions on people’s health and help prevent fires from getting out of control.Smoke from burning leaves, grass, brush, and tree needles can cause asthma, emphysema, bronchitis, and lung cancer. Poor air quality disproportionately harms children, the elderly, and those with breathing problems. Backyard fires that get out of control set off most of the wildfires caused by people.A detailed list of recipients and the

projects supported, are online.