Talking Trash: Understanding the effectiveness of levels of Outreach on Contamination Rates in Seattle.

Risa Suho, Program of the Environment, University of Washington
Site Supervisor: Sally Hulsman, Rich Gacer
Faculty Supervisor: Kristina Straus, Program of the Environment, University of Washington

Questions
- Are current forms of contamination outreach effective?
- Which forms of outreach are most effective in lowering levels of contamination?

Acknowledgements
Thank you to my site supervisors, Sally and Rich, my manager Katie Lynd and SPU, my site supervisor Kristi Straus, and other professors. Thank you to the other students. Thank you friends and family, and listening to me complain over sleepless nights. Thank you to my dog for keeping me company during those sleepless nights.

Background
- The average American produces 4.9lbs (2.2kg) a day. Resulting in millions of tons of waste in the environment.
- Municipalities have been recycling and composting solid waste to mitigate the amount of garbage that ends up in landfills.
- However, recycling and composting can be difficult as a new societal practice.
- Code 17 is the outreach protocol that monitors and provides outreach in Seattle to help people lower their contamination.

Methods
- Data analysis on Code 17 contamination data (Quantitative). Code 17 outreach, through calling customers about instances of contamination (Qualitative)
- Internship responsibilities were management of outreach tools, social media and Code 17 outreach.

Results
- In general current outreach methods are effective in decreasing contamination rates
- Phone calls and in-person outreach are the most effective forms of outreach in lowering levels of contamination
- Recycling has the highest contamination rates.
- Continuing to use special treatment on focus areas is better than general outreach.
- Main outreach reaches property managers rather than residents.

Implications
- Garbage takes up space, emits tons of GHGs, air and water pollution from oils, chemicals and fumes from garbage.
- Less Contamination = Less Garbage
- Investing in an effective outreach process would lead to further decrease in contamination
- More focus on person-person contact
- More focus on guidance in recycling

Fig 1 represents the which forms of waste sorting by Single/Multi family housing produces more contamination by size.

Fig 2 represents the zip codes in Seattle from 2020-2022 that have the highest levels of contamination. Notice that only 2 out of 5 have increasing contamination.