



TALKING TRASH: EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC OUTREACH IN SOLID WASTE

Session: A, Breakout Room #22

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Seattle Public Utilities have been managing the composting and recycling services in the city for years, but there is still a massive amount of waste that could be recycled or composted. If 10% or more of a bin has materials that don't belong to the bin, such as garbage in a recycling bin the recycling bin will not be recycled, and contents will be dumped in a landfill. When wrong materials are discarded into the wrong bin, this is then considered a contamination. To minimize levels of contamination in Seattle, Seattle Public Utilities developed the Code 17 program. This program is different forms of outreach from letters, oops tags, phone calls and if needed in-person inspections. However, we need to monitor if these efforts were successful in the goal of reducing levels of contamination over time. General results support that outreach efforts do aid in reducing levels of contamination. Through the data analysis and qualitative experience, we have learned there are areas of improvement such as focusing on certain zip codes and identifying if current methods are effective. In order to minimize this issue, we must improve people's access to information and resources by evaluating the current effectiveness of current public outreach strategies.