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## Environment Committee

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### HB 1309

**Brief Description:** Directing state investments of existing litter tax revenues under chapter 82.19 RCW in material waste management efforts without increasing the tax rate.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Upthegrove, Short, Magendanz, Nealey, Morris, Walsh, Takko, McCoy, Lias, Springer, Pollet and Kagi.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds composting as a subject covered by the Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Litter Control Act.
- Changes requirements for litter tax funds allocated to local government grant programs, local government waste reduction and recycling programs, and litter collection efforts coordinated by the Department of Ecology (DOE).

**Hearing Date:** 2/14/13

**Staff:** Jacob Lipson (786-7196).

#### Background:

The Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Litter Control Act (Act), dating to 1971, prohibits littering and establishes statewide programs to prevent and clean up litter, reduce waste, and increase recycling. These programs are funded by the 0.015 percent litter tax (chapter 82.19 RCW) on retailers' gross proceeds on 13 categories of consumer products. The products subject to the litter tax include groceries, alcoholic beverages, household paper products, glass and metal containers, and toiletries.

#### Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Litter Control Programs.

The programs funded by the litter tax under the Act include litter collection efforts by state agencies, and state assistance of local government waste reduction and recycling programs. Also established by the Act is the Ecology Youth Corps program, which employs teens to collect litter

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from highways, parks, and other public areas, and to recycle collected materials as appropriate. Litter tax funding is directed to programs as follows:

- 20 percent of litter tax funds are allocated to local city and county waste reduction, recycling, and litter control programs, which are administered by the DOE as the Community Litter Cleanup Program;
- 30 percent of litter tax funds are allocated to the DOE for waste reduction and recycling efforts; and
- 50 percent of litter tax funds are allocated to litter collection efforts by several state agencies, including the Departments of Ecology, Transportation, Corrections, Revenue, and Natural Resources. This 50 percent allocation of the litter tax is also used to cover the DOE's costs of coordinating statewide litter control efforts, to conduct a statewide litter survey, and to conduct statewide public awareness programs.

#### Reporting Requirements.

Every two years the DOE must survey statewide litter composition, sources, demographics, and geographic trends. Every two years in March, the DOE must also provide the Legislature with a summary of state and local governments' waste reduction, litter control, and recycling efforts.

#### **Summary of Bill:**

##### Scope of the Act.

The encouragement of composting is added as a purpose of the Act. State and local government programs authorized by the Act may include composting activities in addition to waste reduction, recycling, and litter control efforts, and these efforts must be primarily focused on the 13 categories of products subject to the litter tax.

##### Allocation of Litter Tax Funds.

Thirty percent of litter tax funds are allocated to the DOE for three purposes:

- to implement waste reduction, recycling, and composting efforts, including the development of statewide public awareness programs, the completion of litter surveys and reporting, and coordination with other state agencies, local governments, and voluntary efforts;
- to provide technical assistance to local governments for recycling and composting programs; and
- to increase access to composting and recycling programs.

The Ecology Youth Corps and litter collection efforts by state agencies are funded by the 50 percent litter collection allocation to the DOE and other agencies.

A matching fund competitive grant program for local governments and nonprofit organizations is funded by the 20 percent of litter tax funds allocated to the DOE to fund local government waste reduction, litter collection, and recycling efforts. The matching grant program is used by local governments and nonprofit organizations for local or statewide litter reduction, recycling, or composting education programs. Any unspent funds from the other categories of litter tax revenue allocations may be applied to the competitive grant program.

#### Reporting Requirements.

Every five years the DOE must survey statewide litter composition, sources, demographics, and geographic trends. The DOE must also provide a summary of waste reduction, litter control, recycling and composting efforts.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.