

# Point Roberts Taxpayers Association

United States and Canadian Citizens Working Together for Point Roberts, WA

PO Box 158  
Point Roberts, WA 98281-0158  
[PRTA@pointroberts.net](mailto:PRTA@pointroberts.net)

September 17, 2018

Whatcom County Council  
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 105  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
By Email

Re: Solid Waste Management in Point Roberts

Dear Council Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Point Roberts Taxpayers Association (PRTA) to update you on our views and concerns regarding solid waste management in Point Roberts.

The Association's official position is, and has been since 2009, to favor tax-based universal mandatory curbside collection of garbage and recyclables along with policies and programs aimed at encouraging recycling and waste reduction, for both residential and commercial establishments.

On September 12, 2018, our Board of Directors passed by majority vote a motion regarding the new minimum level of residential service, effective January 1, 2019. In the new solid waste management ordinance, Council has set it at 26 32-gallon trash cans per year, whereas in all other unincorporated areas of Whatcom County, UTC tariffs allow customers to opt for a lower minimum of one 20-gallon can per month (12 per year). PRTA believes that customers in Point Roberts should have that same lower option. We note that approximately 75 percent of residences in Point Roberts are Canadian-owned and occupied only part-time or seasonally.

Aside from uniformity of policy in the County, there are two main arguments for the lower minimum: 1) to reduce the financial burden on households of the new mandatory service; and 2) to encourage recycling and a reduced stream of solid waste going to landfills.

We note that Whatcom County policy, as expressed in its 2008 Comprehensive Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan, makes waste reduction and recycling the preferred methods of handling solid waste. To quote from Whatcom County Code on Solid Waste and Residential Recycling Collection, Chapter 8.10.010B: "Certain service levels and rate structures for solid waste and recycling collection are hereby established in Whatcom County to further the objectives



PO Box 158  
Point Roberts, WA 98281-0158  
[PRTA@pointroberts.net](mailto:PRTA@pointroberts.net)

September 16, 2018

Whatcom County Council  
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 105  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
By Email

Re: Implementing mandatory garbage collection in Point Roberts

Dear Council Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Point Roberts Taxpayers Association (PRTA) to suggest two measures to improve solid waste management in Point Roberts, in the new environment of universal mandatory curbside collection, which is policy we have long supported.

On August 8, 2018, our Board of Directors voted unanimously to request the County to 1) develop an appropriate mechanism to subsidize or otherwise reduce the financial burden of mandatory service (beginning January 1, 2019) on low income households and 2) implement a program of public education in Point Roberts to promote recycling and waste reduction.

Many members of our community have expressed the feeling that the new mandatory fees, to be added to their property tax bill, will create a genuine financial hardship. We wonder if there might be some mechanism to define and address this.

From our perspective, one of the reasons to favor the new policy of universal mandatory curbside collection is to promote recycling and waste reduction. The new policy provides some financial incentives to utilize the services that customers will be required to purchase. However, we believe that the County has an obligation to implement a focused program of public education to encourage household composting, recycling, and re-use in order to meaningfully reduce the stream of waste into our landfills.

Finally, I would note that the PRTA has also called for curbside recycling service for commercial customers in Point Roberts. To address only residential recycling leaves a huge hole in the effort to achieve waste reduction.

Thank you for your consideration of these suggestions.

Sincerely,

Mark Robbins, President

cc: Jeff Hegedus, Environmental Health Supervisor, Whatcom County Health Department  
Jeff Christopher, Chair, Point Roberts Community Advisory Committee  
Barbara Bradstock, Secretary, PRTA