

# Whatcom County Disposal of Toxics Program

July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Public Works and Health Committee



WHATCOM COUNTY  
**HEALTH AND  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICES**



# Program Highlights

- Serves all of Whatcom County
- Receives hazardous waste from residents for free and small businesses for a fee
- Open every week day and the first Saturday of the month
- Free material exchange station
- Three satellite oil/antifreeze collection sites
- Some accepted materials:
  - Paint
  - Auto fluids
  - Fluorescent bulbs
  - Garden chemicals
  - Aerosols
  - Cleaners

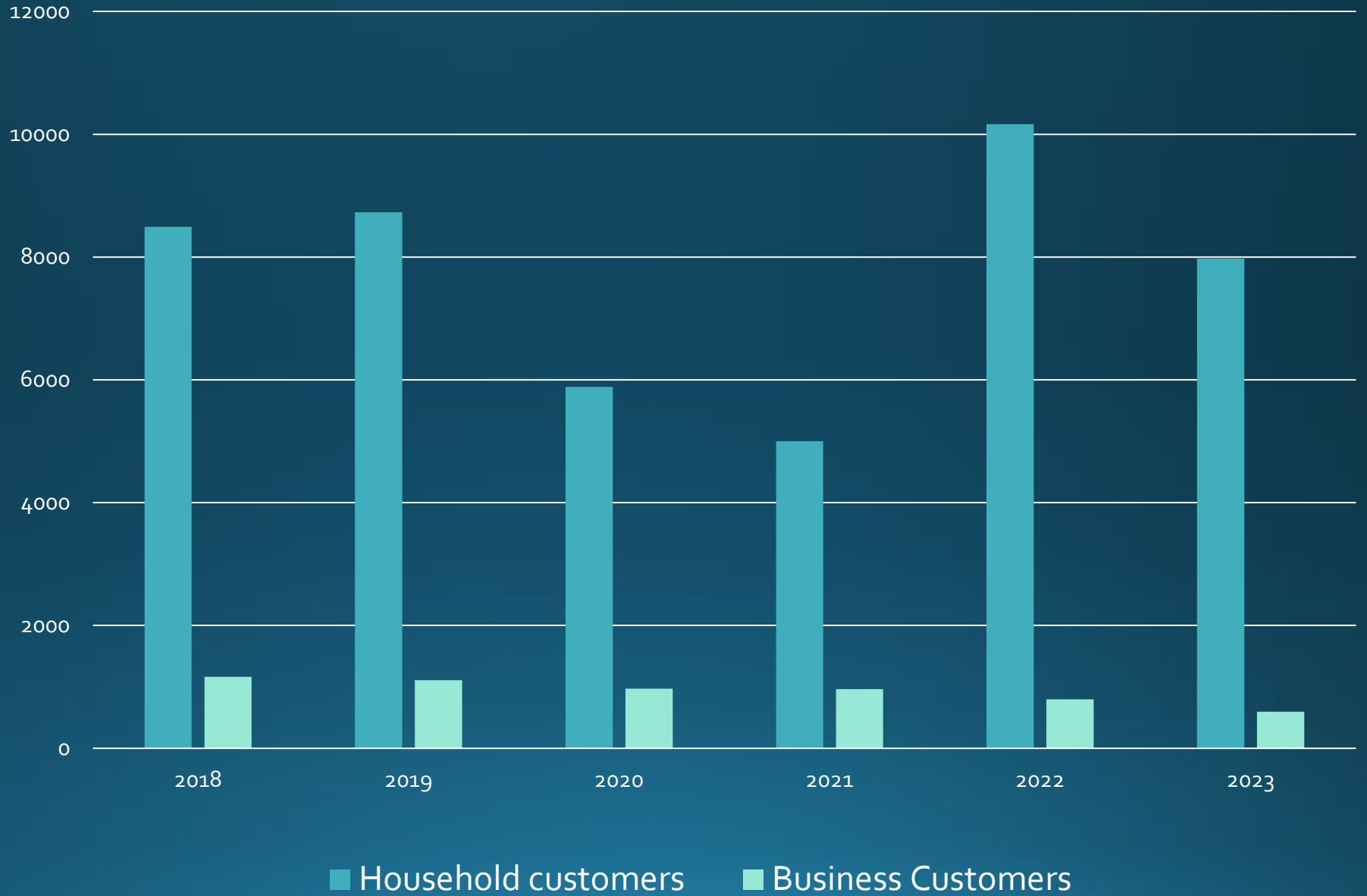


# Program History

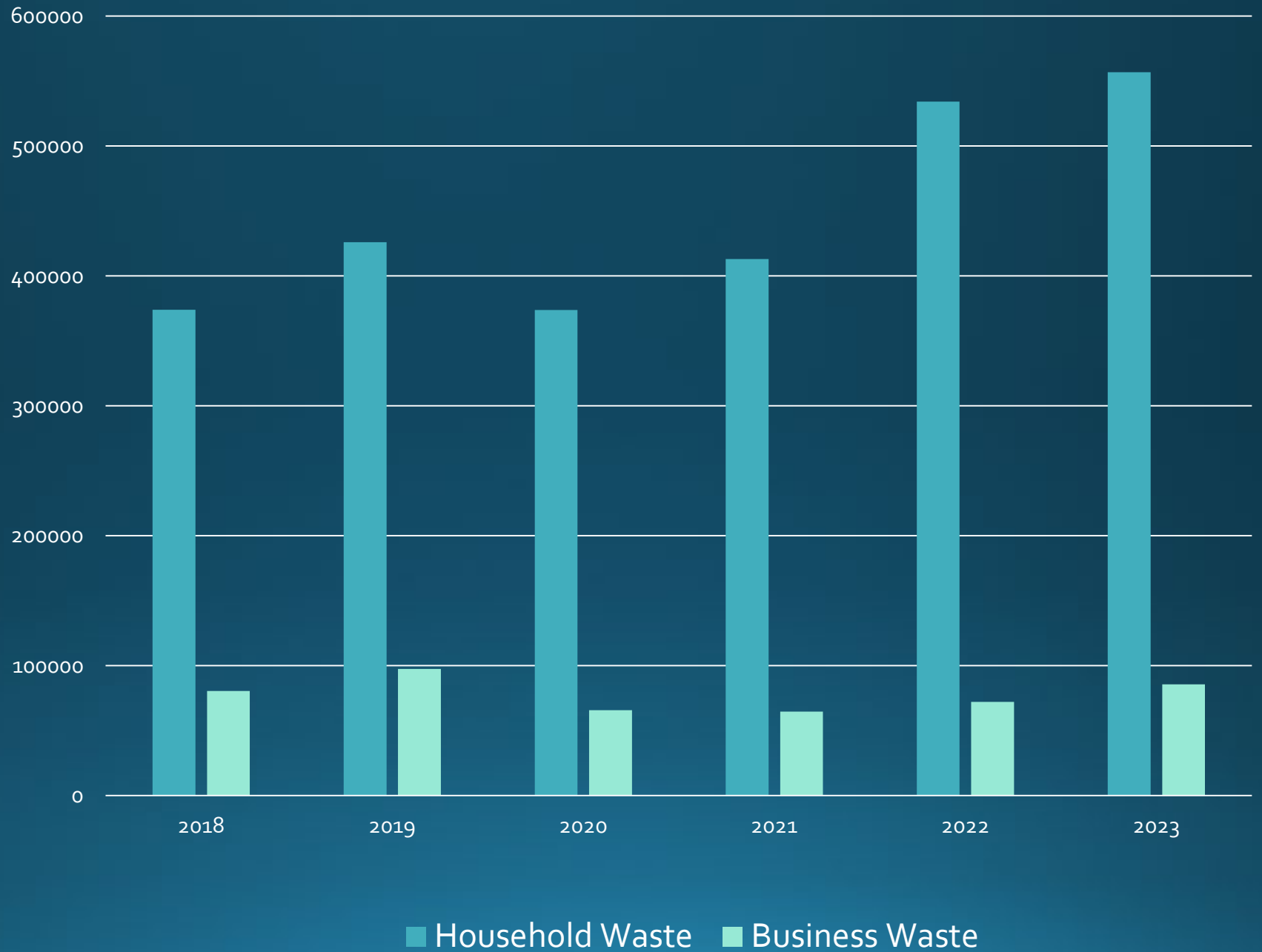
- Program dates back to early 1980s, one of the first programs in the state
- Originally a joint program by Bellingham and Whatcom County
- Current facility was built circa 2000
- Staffed by three full-time employees (third staff member was added in 2002)



# Facility Customers 2018-2023



# Waste Amounts in pounds 2018-2023



# Current Status

- Contract with current facility operator is expiring at the end of 2024
- Feasibility study conducted to look at possibility of Whatcom County assuming administrative and operational control
- Study compared financial and administrative costs of contracting services out vs County control



# Whatcom County Disposal of Toxics Facility Feasibility Study Summary

**Table: Average Annual Facility Cost Comparison of County and Private Contractor Operation**  
(Table 6-1 from page 19 of Feasibility Study)

Description	County	Private Contractor
<b>Upfront Capital Expenses</b>		
<b>Vehicles and Equipment</b>		
Truck	\$75,000	--
Forklift	\$45,000	--
Computers	\$1,500	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$121,500</b>	<b>--</b>
<b>Ongoing Facility Expenses</b>		
<b>Facility Staffing<sup>(a)</sup></b>		
Support Staff	\$142,107-\$212,551	\$175,795
Lead Staff	\$77,184-\$116,249	\$106,733
<b>Vendors and Subcontractors<sup>(b)</sup></b>	<b>\$35,177</b>	<b>\$41,385</b>
<b>Vehicles and Equipment<sup>(c)</sup></b>		
Truck	\$15,600	\$9,248
Forklift	\$7,200	\$9,633
<b>Utilities<sup>(b)</sup></b>	<b>\$16,006<sup>(d)</sup></b>	<b>\$17,561</b>
<b>Supplies<sup>(b)</sup></b>	<b>\$9,397</b>	<b>\$11,056</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$301,972-\$411,181</b>	<b>\$412,080</b>

(a) Staff annual cost for County operation is calculated using the anticipated range of union hourly rates. Total compensation reported includes hourly rate and all benefits. Annual cost for private contractor operation reflects current Clean Earth hourly rates and the standard anticipated total monthly hours (160 hours per person).

(b) Costs are calculated to be the same as the private contractor costs, excluding the 15 percent markup.

(c) Annual vehicle costs represent the equipment rental and revolving fund rate, including maintenance, replacement, and major repairs.

(d) Monthly phone charges (\$80) are included with other DoT facility utilities.

COUNTY			PRIVATE CONTRACTOR		
8	5	6	11	8	0
Positive Conditions	Negative Conditions	Neutral Conditions	Positive Conditions	Negative Conditions	Neutral Conditions
+	-	o	+	-	o
Description	County	Private Contractor			
<b>Facility Operations</b>					
Waste Processing, Transportation, and Disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Direct control with incentive to maximize packaging efficiency.</li> <li>o Need to establish arrangements with disposal facilities, usually through transporter.</li> <li>o County maintains responsibility for packaged waste.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contracted with limited control and no incentive to maximize packaging efficiency.</li> <li>+ Already own or contracted transporters and facilities relationships.</li> <li>+ Contractor assumes responsibility for packaged waste</li> </ul>			
Long-term liability	o County maintains liability due to County packaging of materials.	+ Jurisdiction maintains CERCLA liability, but contractor assumes primary contractual liability.			
SQG Acceptance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited familiarity with unusual waste types.</li> <li>- County needs to establish process for receiving payments.</li> <li>+ Greater control over collection of payments from SQGs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Familiarity with existing business wastes classification and acceptance.</li> <li>+ Established billing and payment system.</li> <li>- Limited incentive to collect payments from SQGs to credit the County.</li> </ul>			

COUNTY		PRIVATE CONTRACTOR	
<b>Facility Staffing</b>			
Support Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited pool of trained staff and may be difficult to replace.</li> <li>+ Direct control over level of training.</li> <li>+ Longevity is more likely due to competitive union benefits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Hiring practices are more flexible; staff and/or temporary labor may be more readily available.</li> <li>- Staff training may not be as robust and may require County verification.</li> <li>- Higher level of turnover in staff is expected.</li> </ul>	
Staff Supervision	+ Direct supervision of operations.	- Limited oversight of operational staff.	
Administrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- County personnel must attend to other responsibilities and have limited current availability.</li> <li>o County to review invoices and address errors from subcontract firms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Regular invoicing with administrative staff positions identified in the contract.</li> <li>+ County reviewer identifies invoice errors and contractor must address with subcontractors.</li> </ul>	
Contractual Oversight	+ Internal management of contractual oversight.	- Requires contractual oversight of operations and invoicing.	
Training	o External training required but is readily available.	+ May have in-house training program or send staff to external training company.	
Cost	o County union contract	+ Market rate, which may include union labor rates and terms.	
<b>Vehicles and Equipment</b>			
	- County will need to purchase and include capital expenses and ongoing maintenance costs in their annual budget	+ Contractor will provide a suitable truck and forklift (either owned by the contractor or leased/rented) and charge WCHCS a monthly rate plus markup.	
<b>Utilities</b>			
	+ Utilities will be billed directly to WCHCS with no markup.	- Utilities will be included on the contractor invoice with a markup.	
<b>Supplies</b>			
	+ May have quantity discounts.	- May be above market rate.	
Notes: + Positive condition - Negative condition o Neutral condition			





Questions?