

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Berman with news and commentary for Tuesday, January 14, 2025.

In an effort to clear up misconceptions about glass recycling, the Jefferson County Department of Solid Waste yesterday posted an informative yet irreverent Q&A about the issue. It was only up for a few minutes, at which time the department was forced to take it down by county management. Jefferson County Public Works director Monte Reinders told KPTZ that the release was withdrawn because it needed to be edited in order to remove some of the more emotional aspects. But we applaud the effort to inject some personality into press releases, which are often as dry as dirt.

Even if its tone was unconventional the document – which was sent to KPTZ prior to its removal – had a plethora of helpful information about the decision to stop accepting glass recycling, where residents lump in their glass with regular garbage that is taken to a less environmentally friendly landfill. Glass represents about 1% of the total solid waste stream in Jefferson County. It then takes a left turn. The real crisis, according to the post, is climate change and if our first and only response to a world on fire is recycling, then our children and grandchildren are getting a bad deal and deserve new adults in their life. Again, not your standard Q&A.

The focus should be on ending single-use containers and transitioning to an economy where durable containers stay in circulation without the need to reprocess them. And for this, we need to look to the Washington State Legislature, which is now in session.

There are two relevant bills. The first is called the Recycling Reform Act. It would require producers of certain products to pay for the collection, recycling, and sorting of these products. The goal of the act is to increase recycling rates, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and make recycling more accessible and affordable for residents.

The most significant solution is to pass a bottle bill, similar to those on the rest of the West Coast and Canada. These programs charge a small per-bottle deposit fee and this encourages much higher rates of recycling, creates jobs, and keeps bottles out of the roadside ditches. A bottle bill died in the last legislative session, advancing to the floor where it failed to win majority support. The post said the best hope for a fix to our recycled glass mess is to call the elected State representatives and advocate for these measures.

The withdrawn Q&A is not available to the public, but more information is available at <https://jeffersoncountysolidwaste.com/recycling/>.

Fort Worden partners had several meetings last week with Washington State Parks representatives about the disposition of park leases and assuming responsibilities from the late and not necessarily lamented Public Development Authority. While there are no conclusions reached there was a bit more clarity about the path ahead. Kitsap Bank is looking to recover an unpaid debt from the PDA and involved a receiver to do so, but that receiver is out of the picture for now. It has returned the keys to park buildings and is no longer allowed on campus.

Partners are working to assume the responsibilities of the PDA: lease management and bill paying. Parks has been in communication with the JeffCo PUD about unpaid utility bills and has staved off utility shutdown, and

that partners can expect to be billed for utility costs again soon through state parks. So there is no danger of losing power on campus for now. And Parks is staffing up to take over the maintenance and groundskeeping for that portion of the park that was previously managed by the PDA.

The boiler in the commons building is functional again for minimal heat, and parks maintenance staff are still looking for a long-term fix. In the meantime, Fort Worden Hospitality is not currently able to rent or occupy the building, which puts the normal operations of hospitality at risk. The future of the receiver is still uncertain. Its lease proposal was rejected by law but is not cancelled, and the receiver still has choices they have to make before things can precede forward with Washington state parks management of the campus.

KPTZ provides local news Monday through Thursday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.