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QuickPoint! – Metro Should Dump the Garbage Tax

By Allison Coleman

Portland-area voters just approved Ballot Measure 26-178, which imposes a five-year property tax that will generate \$80 million dollars for Metro to maintain parks owned by the agency.

On the surface, this seems like a wonderful thing; everyone likes parks, and they need to be maintained. However, [local residents are already paying a Metro garbage tax](#) of \$2.50 per ton, originally intended for this very purpose.

In 2002 the Metro Council enacted a garbage tax to pay for the operating costs of parks. In 2004 the tax was raised from \$1.50 per ton to \$2.50 per ton. Between 2004 and 2015, this tax brought in \$46.8 million dollars for Metro.

In 2006, Metro “undicated” the tax, meaning it would still be collected but the money would be swept into the general fund for other purposes.

This year, the Metro Council claimed they needed the operating levy to maintain their parks, but they never told voters about the garbage tax.

Metro should do the honorable thing and repeal the garbage tax. Voters may not mind paying for parks, but there is no reason to tax them twice.

Allison Coleman is a Research Associate at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research organization.