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UNC students support new N.C. recycling initiative

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Staff Writer

A flash mob freeze and serenade in the Pit on Thursday sought to raise awareness for a law making it illegal for North Carolinians to throw away plastic bottles instead of recycling them. The law went into effect Thursday.

"Recycle thy bottle or shackle thy hands," proclaimed one banner.

Students froze in front of a tower of empty water bottles with plastic bottles in hand, while an a cappella group sang an environmentally aware remix of Jordin Sparks' "Battlefield."

The original chorus line was replaced by, "Why do you always want a landfill?" The song concluded with a mad dash as skit participants rushed to recycle their bottles in nearby bins.

Bill Bobbitt, a chemistry and environmental science major and former co-chairman of the environmental affairs committee of student government, organized the event after receiving the idea from the Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling.

Police officers probably won't be able to enforce the new law, but it is primarily intended to raise awareness about the environmental impact of recycling, Bobbitt said.

Bobbitt said he hopes the law will encourage people to make the extra effort to recycle.

"Everyone is aware that they should recycle, but for a lot of people it's just about convenience," Bobbitt said.

Amy Preble, the recycling and outreach coordinator for the Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling, said the University is trying to make recycling as easy as possible.

Recycling bins are available in every building on campus and in high-traffic areas outside.

The University recycles about 245 tons of plastic bottles and aluminum cans each year. More plastic bottles are distributed on campus than cans, Preble said.

Preble said the University has a fairly healthy recycling rate, but that there is still more room for growth. Orange County as a whole has the highest per capita recycling rate for plastic bottles in the state, according to the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

“Even though we’re doing a good job, we could always do a better job,” Preble said.

Preble said the state is blessed with numerous environmental resources and recycling companies, and that she hopes the new law will help raise awareness and encourage citizens to use these facilities.

The event was largely a student initiative, Preble said.

“We just supplied the recycling bins and shut up.”

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

Campus

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