

DATE: 7-22-08

PROPOSAL TITLE: Establish strong government procurement practices based on product environmental performance

What is the problem?

We need to improve the environmental performance of products. The production, transportation, use and end-of-life management of products results in huge GHG emissions, many of which are avoidable. Many products available to consumers have significant environmental burdens associated with them. Not the least of which is climate impacts.

Government (state, local and special service districts) in the state of Washington combine to be the largest consumer of many products, having multi-billion dollar buying power.

Government should set the example and demand products that perform well environmentally and in use.

At the present time, "preference" is given to certain products that contain recycled materials, when all other things are equal. Other than that, environmental performance is not required in purchasing decisions.

What are the target materials? (i.e. carpet, packaging, paper, food, organics, etc.)

Paper, carpet, electronics, recycled paint, cleaning chemicals lamps and vehicle wheel weights.

What is the potential for reduction in green house gas emissions (tons)?

Being determined. Requiring the lowest carbon footprint associated with products consumed by government will help reduce overall emissions throughout the chain of commerce.

What action is needed (specifically)?

Review and amend existing purchasing laws and regulations.

Incorporate mandatory environmental performance standards into all purchasing decisions – products with the lowest achievable environmental impacts then compete on price for the final purchasing award.

What mechanism should be used to put the action in place (legislation, executive order, regulations, policies, etc.)?

Governor's executive order requiring use of ERP in the categories listed above, along with legislation amending procurement-related RCWs to accomplish the same and also to require environmental performance standards. An enforceability mechanism should also be included.

Mechanism for developing specifications for environmentally responsible products

Tools to inform and educate government (and possible non-government) purchasers of the available products and how to purchase them

Is the proposal ready to proceed? (i.e. can the deliverable be delivered Sept 1? What is the current stage of development)?

Existing statutes are currently being reviewed.

Affected parties and likely positions: How feasible is it in terms of support/opposition?

Positions of all parties are unknown at this time. Parties include:

Department of General Administration

Department of Printing

Department of Information Services

Correctional Industries

Colleges and Universities

County and city governments

Special service districts

Products suppliers (manufacturers, wholesalers, etc.)

If this proposal is adopted and is implemented:

Who will be responsible to implement?

Government agencies – state and local.

How will it be implemented?

Through development of regulations implementing the statutory changes.

When will it be implemented?