

Title: Government Environmentally Responsible Purchasing

Establish, through a Governor's Executive Order, an intergovernmental work group to evaluate the need for and recommend revisions to state purchasing laws, regulations and practices to ensure that products and services used by government have the lowest possible environmental and carbon footprint.

Description

This action is about identifying barriers to environmentally responsible purchasing within current legislation and regulations and creating the legislated authorizing environment within which ERP can be achieved.

While the focus of the proposal is to reduce the carbon footprint of governmental purchasing, it is anticipated that proposed legislation will require that all purchases made with Washington state funds meet environmental performance characteristics, such as lowest possible GHG emissions and no toxicity. Currently, state purchasing contracts are awarded on price, availability and physical performance. This measure will add a fourth criterion, environmental performance, to the list.

Impacts on Goals

The opportunity to leverage a significant portion of the state's buying power to achieve noticeable GHG reductions by the state as a consumer, and to influence other consumers, was the rationale for selecting this action.

The affect on reducing greenhouse gases is unknown at this point. As a major consumer of products and fossil fuels, the potential for reductions is significant.

Additional Benefits

This action presents the potential for more green collar jobs and green businesses within Washington.

Costs

Actual costs of desired products and services may or may not be higher than more traditional products have been. However, when product comparisons include life cycle costs throughout the supply chain along with environmental costs, it is likely that products meeting environmental performance standards will be price competitive.

Other Impacts

Local government will be affected by the statutory changes as well. Embedding environmentally responsible purchasing in state law will influence local governments by providing them the tools and authorities needed to integrate ERP into their own purchasing practices.

Relationship to Other Efforts

Additional actions that should be included in the Executive Order are:

- Adoption of the EPEAT standards for all computers purchased by government
- Adoption of a policy to require the use of 100% recycled content, process chlorine free office paper
- Establishment of standards for motor vehicles used by government related to environmental performance.