

## **Title: Collaborate with Retailers to Reduce Consumer Waste**

### **Description**

- The goal is to prevent waste, and thereby reduce GHG emissions, by providing consumers with better product options and information and by decreasing product packaging.
- Waste prevention measures result in greater GHG emission reductions than recycling. AW-3 envisioned an overall 15% reduction goal, in addition to increased recycling.
- At least 50% of household wastes come through retailers. Retailers would be asked to help the state meet an overall 15% reduction goal, as described in AW-3, through voluntary actions.
- Collaboration with retailers provides a unique opportunity to reach product producers and suppliers as well as consumers---because retailers have enormous influence on the products and packaging offered to consumers and have the most direct consumer contact.
- Projects often can be structured to also benefit retailers through, for example, reduced shipping costs by light-weighting packaging and less spoilage of food.
- The implementation mechanism is a memorandum of agreement with the Governor's office to set specific commitments to improve options to consumers and reduce product packaging. The two initial targets are packaging and food waste.
- Food waste: nearly one-third of the food that is purchased is thrown away. The "Love Food, Hate Waste" campaign engages retailers and producers in developing packaging for longer safe food storage and information about how to store food properly.
- An example of a possible packaging initiative addresses wine bottles: in the glassrite bottle initiative retailers could work with wine producers to lightweight wine bottles.
- Both initiatives are based on successful UK programs.

### **Impacts on Goals**

- Up to 400,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent could be eliminated if we reduced in-state food waste generation by half.
- In the UK, reduced materials and energy use from the wine bottle initiative equated to 788,229 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent reduction per year.

### **Additional Benefits**

- Raising the profile of climate change with retailers and, through them, producers, suppliers and consumers has valuable education potential and could prompt these parties to make other more sustainable choices.
- Initiatives have the potential to reduce costs to producers and retailers, e.g., by reducing shipping costs through more lightweight or efficient packaging.
- This proposal is compatible with and complimentary to the product stewardship framework proposal.

### **Costs**

- Costs of state collaborative effort, planning, technical support, outreach and education requires a funding source.
- Other costs and/or savings will be incurred by retailers and/or producers, and these costs or savings most likely will be passed to consumers in the purchase price of products. There are cost savings for retailers associated with main potential waste reduction activities, including less wastage of food.
- There are cost savings for households associated with better product choice, less wastage of food and reduced waste to be disposed.

### **Relationship to Other Efforts**

- This action relies completely on the ability of the state to actively engage retailers in collaborative efforts that appeal to the retail sector because of cost reduction or other benefits.