

Product Stewardship Framework Policy Summary

The goal of product stewardship is to minimize the environmental and health impacts of products throughout all stages of their lifecycle. Producers take responsibility for their products from “cradle-to-cradle,” including during manufacture, use, and end-of-life.

Product stewardship framework policy would include:

- State policy that supports and prioritizes product stewardship as an effective approach for financing and increasing the recycling of products and for decreasing GHG generation.
- Product stewardship framework legislation applicable to consumer products. The policy would result in product stewardship recycling programs arranged and paid for by producers. It would also establish a process for adding covered products.
- Language to encourage the design of products that are less toxic, more recyclable, more energy efficient, and have lower GHG emissions during the product’s lifecycle.

Target products include those with high and moderate GHG reductions potential, composite materials and packaging; and energy-saving products whose use we want to encourage (e.g. fluorescent lighting).

Highlights

In this shared responsibility approach, producers would set up and pay for the recycling programs. A variety of collectors would cooperate with producers and their stewardship organizations to voluntarily provide collection services, including *retailers, haulers, thrift charities, local governments, and processors*. *Consumers* would return their unwanted products into the recycling programs. The *Department of Ecology* would provide regulatory oversight and enforcement.

Financing for the recycling programs comes from the manufacturers, *not* from the general fund or local governments. Recycling becomes a cost of doing business, and producers would use their business know-how and relationships to develop cost-effective programs. The Department of Ecology would recover its costs to oversee and enforce the program from the manufacturers. This producer-pays approach minimizes costs to the State and avoids new costs to local governments.

This approach gives producers a financial incentive to design products with smaller carbon footprints, e.g. which are energy efficient, easier to recycle, or use less materials.

Additional benefits of product stewardship programs include utilizing and building on existing collection, transportation and processing infrastructure as well as creating new business opportunities, market development, and green jobs.

A product stewardship approach should be applied to products, technologies, and processes promoted to address GHG emissions, with full lifecycle considerations and cradle-to-cradle management (including end-of-life management) utilized.

Implementation Dates

Framework legislation passed in 2009 would be effective in July 2009. Producers would fully implement recycling programs for an initial set of products by 2011, with additional products added annually.

Mechanism

Legislation, possibly adding to RCW 70.95.

Synergy with Other Proposals

This action would complement the collection proposal.

What Needs To Be Done

- Draft legislative language (building detail into the attached overview).
- Consider which products, if any, to include as initial products. Possibilities include carpet, batteries, additional electronics, fluorescent lighting, paint, and thermostats.
- Vet with key stakeholders outside of participants on the Beyond Waste IWG.