

Title:***Environmentally Responsible Purchasing*****2009 Action Description:**

Revise state purchasing laws, regulations and practices to ensure that products and services used by government have the lowest possible environmental footprint.

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.

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, GA purchasing contracts are awarded on price, availability and physical performance. This measure will add a fourth criterion, environmental performance, to the list.

Basis for Selection:

A soon to be released EPA study demonstrates that at least 50% of the global greenhouse gases are attributable to products.

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. Although this proposal will not be ready to implement in the 2009 legislative session, it is an important action to take as soon as possible, likely the 2010 legislative session.

According to the Director of the Department of General Administration, Washington state government (including members of the Washington State Purchasing Cooperative) spends \$8 billion each year buying products and services through a "maze of purchasing authorizations." It appears that a very small amount of this total is intentionally directed to goods and services that reduce GHG emissions or that incorporate other environmentally responsible attributes. Many products with smaller climate impacts are available now.

Implementation Approach and Mechanisms:

The Washington Departments of Ecology and General Administration will be asked to convene and facilitate a working group to develop an ERP program by June 2009, which will include an integrated set of revisions to the myriad laws and regulations that govern state purchasing, but may also include additional elements. The working group should include representatives from:

- State government
- county government
- city government
- special service districts
- others members of the Washington State Purchasing Cooperative
- colleges and universities
- K-12
- vendors

- Department of Printing
- Department of Information Services

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Supporting Information:

- **Costs or cost savings:** Actual costs of desired products and services may or may not be higher than more traditional products have been. However, when life cycle costs through the supply chain are considered, it is likely that products meeting environmental performance standards will be price competitive over time. Considering the costs of correcting environmental damage, the price should be a bargain.
- **External benefits:** Potential for more green collar jobs and green businesses within Washington.
- **Engagement opportunities for individual action/behavior change:** This proposal focuses on changing the way government goes about its business in acquiring goods and services. When implemented, it will affect all suppliers and vendors.
- **Economic Implications:** This proposal will put the \$8 billion buying power of the state to work to reduce GHG generation. Approximately 7% -10% of the state's spending is purchased through approximately 300 GA contracts. The proposed purchasing requirements and processes that result from this effort should also apply to the other 90% of purchases that are made outside the state contracts, whether through delegation authority from GA, or through other sources, including the Dept of Information Services, the Department of Printing, Department of Transportation, Department of Social and Health Services, Department of Health and possibly others.
- **Engagement opportunities for local and regional governments and private sector:** Local government will be affected by the statutory changes as well. Both from amendments to their purchasing authorities and by their customer relationship to the Department of General Administration.