

# Washington Toxics Reduction Strategy Group Meeting #2

---

## *Draft Principles - 10/19/2012*

*This document contains a working draft of principles for the Toxic Reduction Strategies Workgroup.*

### 4. Principles

4.1. Purpose: The purpose of the principles is to provide guidelines for Washington State decision makers—including the Washington State Department of Ecology, the Washington State Department of Health, the State Legislature, and Washington State Congressional delegations—to identify and implement strategies and actions to reduce toxic exposures in Washington. These actions will address legacy contaminants as well as toxic chemicals that are currently in commerce or may be in the future. The principles provide a framework for prioritizing responses and articulate the roles of different actors in society.

### 4.2. Principles for Toxics Reduction Strategies

Our approach to eliminating toxic exposures in Washington is guided by three types of principles: (1) overarching principles that relate to all of the strategies and actions, (2) principles that relate to managing toxics as waste or as legacy contaminants, and (3) principles that relate to preventing toxic exposures from present-day and future toxic chemicals. The principles are outlined below.

#### 4.2.1. Overarching Principles

4.2.1.1. Shared Responsibility: Government, industry, non-governmental organizations, and individuals share responsibility for addressing toxics.

- Government's role is to *[e.g., protect humans and the environment from harmful exposures to toxic chemicals, assess chemical safety, set standards, provide public access to chemical safety and health information, etc.]*.
- Industry's role is to *[e.g., provide information to the government to support chemical safety and public access to chemical health and safety information, disclose information about chemical hazards in products, clean up toxic releases, use safer chemical alternatives when available, etc.]*.
- The role of other non-governmental organizations, such as environmental organizations and research institutions, is to *[e.g., develop safer alternatives, conduct research, etc.]*
- Individuals' responsibility is to *[e.g., consider chemical safety and health information when choosing products, use products containing hazardous ingredients as directed, etc.]*

4.2.1.3. Prevention: It is cheaper, more efficient, and safer to use less toxic or non-toxic alternatives rather than to address toxics by regulating waste streams or cleaning up legacy contaminants.

- Detoxifying products and substituting safer chemicals are better long-term solutions than relying on cleanup and waste regulations to prevent exposures to toxic chemicals.

4.2.1.2. Set Priorities: We cannot do everything at once, so we should prioritize chemicals of concern.

#### 4.2.2. Principles for Managing Toxic Wastes and Cleaning Up Legacy Contaminants

- Something about minimizing transaction costs?
- Something about approaches that maximize environmental gain?

#### 4.2.3. Principles for Preventing Exposure from Present-Day and Future Toxic Chemicals

4.2.3.1. Chemical Safety: The public has a right to expect that the products they use are safe. The public should have access to clear, transparent, and actionable information about chemical and safety hazards associated with chemicals in products.

4.2.3.2. Disclosure: Producers and manufacturers have a responsibility to provide hazard, exposure, and use data about chemicals in products and processes to government and to companies in their supply chains so that safety can be demonstrated. Government agencies and manufacturers should share responsibility for providing public access to chemical health and safety information.

4.2.3.3. Precaution: The unknowns and the complexities in understanding chemical exposures and the effects on human health and the environment warrant a precautionary approach.

- A precautionary approach is not meant to stifle innovation or eliminate all risks, rather it is meant to say that when a chemical or product raises threats of harm to humans or the environment precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. It is intended to reinforce that the producer or manufacturer of a chemical or product, rather than the public, should have the responsibility to ensure that the chemical or product is safe. (From the Wingspread principle: <http://www.sehn.org/wing.html> (10/18/2012).)

4.2.2.1. Lifecycle Costs: Lifecycle environmental costs should be internalized, rather than borne by external parties.

- The responsibility for the costs of toxics should be shared by producers, manufacturers, and consumers.