

## Environmentally Preferable Purchasing: Achieving Best Value for the State

### What is the opportunity?

Although Washington State advocates economic and environmental vitality, current state purchasing law does not require government to consider the environmental attributes of the goods and services it buys. That includes whether products contain chemicals most likely to harm people or the environment.

Recognizing that industry is always poised to find innovative solutions to satisfy an unmet need, Washington State wants to further stimulate access to innovative green alternatives by requiring purchasing practices that regularly consider green goods and/or services.

Washington State government buys billion of dollars worth of goods and services every year. Twenty percent of all purchases made in Washington State are by government<sup>1</sup>. By effectively leveraging Washington's purchasing power, Washington can promote new market development and introduce even more competitively priced green or environmentally preferred alternative products and services.

### Why is making this change important?

Green purchasing offers improved economies and efficiencies through:

- Reduced management and disposal costs for solid and hazardous waste.
- Reduced operational costs.
- Decreased employee health and safety costs.

### WHY IT MATTERS

Green products are cost competitive and help create a healthy and safer environment for Washington citizens.

The purchase and use of green products:

- Reduces greenhouse gases.
- Conserves energy and water.
- Reduces the amount of toxics used and disposed.
- Is an effective pollution prevention strategy.
- Decreases waste and unsustainable packaging materials.
- Maximizes the use of recycled content materials.
- Promotes the practice of reuse and recycling.
- Reduces human exposure to toxics throughout a product's life cycle, from formulation, through management and use, to disposal.

### Special accommodations

*To ask about available formats for the visually impaired please call the Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program at 360-407-6700.*

*Persons with hearing loss can call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability can call 877-833-6341.*

<sup>1</sup> Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2010 First Quarter Gross Domestic Product report.

The purchase price of many of today's green products is the same or less when compared to traditional products. Green products already purchased by Washington State government at prices equal to or less than traditional products include remanufactured toner cartridges, cleaning products, and re-refined motor oil.

Green purchasing can help leverage millions of dollars annually toward the state's green economy and jobs in Washington State. Earth Friendly Products, a leading maker of green cleaning supplies, created 30 new jobs when it opened a new manufacturing plant in Lacey, Washington in 2010. Grays Harbor Paper in Hoquiam helps supply 100 percent recycled paper to state agencies. Many other Washington businesses that provide green products and services are ready to compete or have competed for state contracts.

To achieve best value for Washington's taxpayers, state contracts must not only consider price, performance, and availability but also the effects to human health and the environment over the life of the product. By incorporating the consideration of green alternatives in everyday purchasing practices, Washington State will not only stimulate a green economy but also positively impact our environment and government operations.

### **Proposed agency request legislation**

The departments of General Administration and Ecology are proposing joint agency legislation for the 2011 session to:

1. Modernize state purchasing law to require consideration of the environmental costs of goods and services purchased.
2. Seek best value in state procurement of goods and services by collectively considering quality, availability, price and environmental attributes.
3. Encourage and incentivize green innovation and economic development in Washington State.

### **Contacts**

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### **More Information**

Visit Ecology's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing web site at [www.ecy.wa.gov/beyondwaste/epp.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/beyondwaste/epp.html).