

Green Procurement Policies: White Paper for Oakland County

Michigan Biobased Products Promotion Campaign Summary

In 2012, Oakland County participated in the Michigan Biobased Products Promotions Campaign. This campaign was grant funded by the United Soybean Board and managed by Clean Energy Coalition, an Ann Arbor, Michigan-based nonprofit focused on promoting clean energy technologies and solutions. Biobased products offer an opportunity to increase the use of products made from renewable resources, reduce petroleum consumption, better manage the carbon cycle, and often offer additional health and safety benefits for users.

As part of this grant, Oakland County was provided with a free biobased products to sample and evaluate. Clean Energy Coalition provided purchasing support and served as the purchasing agent to meet Oakland County's purchasing needs. The County selected three products (total value \$613.09) to evaluate ---Gemtek Graffiti, Tar and Gum Remover (5 gallons), Franmar Soy Scrub Hand Cleaner (11 gallons), and Clean Environment All Purpose Cleaner (1 gallon). Not every product received high marks from the testers, which suggests the importance of product testing. However, one product, Gemtek Graffiti, Tar and Gum Remover, was reported to have "*improved performance*" over the County's previously utilized product.

This white paper offers information on the importance of and resources for developing a comprehensive green procurement policy. A green procurement policy would help to ensure that biobased products continue to be considered during purchasing decisions, where the performance merits, to provide a healthier alternative to traditional petroleum-based products.

A Brief History and Overview of Green Procurement Policy Development

Green Procurement policies, also known as environmentally preferred purchasing, affirmative procurement, eco-procurement, or environmental responsible purchasing takes into consideration not only economic factors, such as cost, but also environmental consideration such as pollution prevention, life-cycle perspective, and resource efficiency.

At the federal level, green procurement policies have been driven by Executive Order 13423, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (Section 6002), 2005 Energy Policy Act, and the 2002 and 2008 Farm Bill. Collectively, these orders and bills have resulted in the development of a BioPreferred program through the USDA *and required* that federal agencies develop green procurement policies that show preference for:

- Biobased Materials
- Recycled Content
- Energy Efficiency
- Water Conservation
- Low Volatile Organic Compounds
- Asbestos and Non-mercury Alternatives

In addition to movement at the federal level, increasing numbers of local (township, city and county), as well as state, governments have adapted their purchasing policies to include environmental factors, in addition to cost and performance. Green procurement policies have gained support because they offer practical measures to further agency goals such as environmental protection, resource management, and worker safety, among others, while often offering significant short-term and long-term cost savings.

A Short Case Study: King County, WA

In 1989, King County adopted its original recycled product procurement policy in response to overburdened landfills and the need to create markets for newly collected recyclables. The policy was expanded in 1995 to include other environmentally preferable products.

The King County Environmental Purchasing Program provides county personnel with information and technical assistance to help them identify, evaluate, and purchase economical and effective environmentally preferable products and services. Environmentally preferable procurement considers multiple product attributes, such as toxicity, durability, emissions, recycled content and conservation of resources, in addition to price, performance and availability.

The program reports annually on the status of policy implementation and the environmental purchasing accomplishments of agencies. In the past year, King County agencies purchased 54 million dollars worth of these products, saving \$837,000 compared to the cost of conventional products. Recycled paper is used for all major government functions, including bus schedules, tax statements, court forms, pet license notifications, business cards, and reports. Other purchases include: remanufactured toner cartridges; re-refined antifreeze and motor-oil; ultra-low sulfur diesel; biodiesel; hybrid vehicles; bio-based oils; plastic lumber, compost, shredded wood-waste and tire-retreading services. In addition to their environmental benefits, many of these products are more economical than those they replace and perform well.

Source-- additional information available:

http://www.kingcounty.gov/operations/procurement/Services/Environmental_Purchasing/About.aspx

Developing Green Procurement Policies

Finding time to develop and implement green procurement policies can be challenging, particularly as governments find themselves with limited staffing and resources. However, the payoff to implementing a strong green procurement policy can be quite significant. Green procurement policies can not only help address internal and community policy goals, but also result in significant cost savings. The starting point, of course, is to identify a consultant, staff person or intern who can serve as project lead for evaluating and

adapting purchasing policies. Although an experienced project manager is helpful, a strong background in green procurement policy development isn't essential to begin the process. Experienced staff will likely be needed at some point during the process, but substantial free guidance on setting up green procurement policies has already been developed by many reputable national leaders, such as the National Association of Counties, League of Cities and the United States Environmental Protection. Appendix A has the resources needed to begin developing a green procurement policy.

Appendix A: Resources

Understanding Green Procurement

Environmental Protection Agency, Indoor Air: Green Procurement
<http://www.epa.gov/oaqps001/community/details/i-greenprocure.html>

Environmental Protection Agency, Environmentally Preferred Purchasing
<http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/epp/index.htm>

Guides for Developing Green Procurement Policies

California Sustainability Alliance, Local Government Green Procurement Guide
http://sustainca.org/tools/green_procurement_toolkit

National Association of Counties
Green Government Initiative: <http://www.naco.org/programs/csd/pages/greenuscommunities.aspx>
Green Purchasing: <http://www.naco.org/programs/csd/Pages/NACoGreenPurchasing.aspx>

League of Cities, Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Guide
<http://www.nlc.org/File Library/Find City Solutions/Research Innovation/Sustainability/environmentally-preferable-purchasing-gid.pdf>

Contract Language, Specifications, and Policies

Environmental Protection Agency, Database of Environmental Information for Products and Services

<http://yosemite1.epa.gov/oppt/eppstand2.nsf/Pages/Search.html?Open>

The EPP Database includes contract language and policies developed by local, state, and federal governments, as well as private organizations.

Responsible Purchasing Network

http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org/purchasing_guides/all/policies/

An international network of buyers dedicated to socially responsible and environmentally sustainable purchasing. Resources include sustainable purchasing policies, products...

Green Product Purchasing

Environmental Protection Agency, Green Purchasing Guides
<http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/epp/pubs/greenguides.htm>

University of Boulder, Environmentally Responsible Purchasing Guidelines
<http://ecenter.colorado.edu/images/stories/greening/875aa3f6ce19ef0018af13e9a7563eafec1341c7.pdf>

U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance, Go Green Program
<http://www.gogreencommunities.org>

United States Soybean Board, Soy Biobased product guide
<http://www.soybiobased.org/products/>

Appendix B: Summary of Product Survey Results

Survey data collected: July, 2012

Franmar Soy Scrub Hand Cleaner

Used by: Building Operations

- Reported being *satisfied* with the product's performance
- One user felt the product worked *about the same* as the previous product used and another felt it had *decreased performance*
- General comments: "*Works well on medium soil. Hands feel great. Heavy soil not removed as well as current product.*"

Clean Environment N-1 All Purpose Cleaner

Used by: Fleet and Building Operations

- Reported feeling *neutral* about the product's performance
- Reported the product had *about the same* level of performance compared to previous product used
- Comments and Concerns: "*The label listed six ingredients which were all chemicals, there is no mention of it being a soy base product. There are no certifications, the product we presently use is Green Seal Certified and Wool Seal Approved...The product worked, but not any better than what we use now. The products we use now also have a higher dilution rate than N-1. I would not recommend purchasing this product in the future. A small amount of the product did spill on one of my filing cabinets and the next day the paint was dissolved where the product had sat.*"

Safe Care Graffiti, Tar and Gum Remover

Used by: Custodial

- Reported being *satisfied* with the product's performance
- Reported the product had *improved performance* over the previous product used
- General Comments: "*Difficult to open and very strong odor.*"

Green Procurement Policies: White Paper for SE Michigan City

Michigan Biobased Products Promotion Campaign Summary

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As part of this grant, the City of [anonymous] was provided with four biobased products (total value \$247.42), of the City's choice, to test and evaluate. Public Services ordered Franmar Hand Sanitizer for a giveaway at public events, as well as BioKleen Toilet Scrub and Soy Cream Cleaner. Natural Area Preservation and Urban Forestry tested Nesoil Biobased Bar and Chain Oil, a biobased product grown and produced in Michigan by Zeeland Farm Services. A summary of product feedback is provided in Appendix A.

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- Recycled Content
- Water Conservation

- Low Volatile Organic Compounds
- Asbestos Alternatives
- Non-mercury Alternatives

In addition to movement at the federal level, increasing numbers of local (township, city and county), as well as state, governments have adapted their purchasing policies to include environmental factors, in addition to cost and performance. Green procurement policies have gained support because they offer practical measures to further agency goals such as environmental protection, resource management, and worker safety, among others, while often offering significant short-term and long-term cost savings.

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Developing Green Procurement Policies

The City of [anonymous] has already developed strong, green procurement standards for a number of key procurement decisions ranging from office products and janitorial services to fleet services. However, the City of [anonymous] lacks a comprehensive green procurement policy which are resulting in some challenges for the City:

- **Decentralized Purchasing:** The City has decentralized purchasing under \$3,000 and, without green procurement guidelines, individual employees lack guidance and information regarding preferred products. Although a financial analysis has not been conducted, it is also likely that these smaller purchases are resulting in increased costs for the City and purchases that are not in line with the City's sustainability goals.
- **Gaps in Green Procurement:** Although the City can highlight many strong green procurement contracts and decisions, a number of opportunities to improve the city's purchasing policies remain. A gaps analysis and purchasing inventory is a key starting place for the City to identify the areas of success that should be celebrated and promoted publicly, as well as areas where green purchasing guidelines currently don't exist. Developing an inventory also allows for ongoing analysis to ensure guidelines are up-to-date with marketplace advancements.

Finding time to develop and implement green procurement policies can be challenging, particularly as local governments find themselves with limited staffing and resources. However, the payoff to implementing a strong green procurement policy can be quite significant. Green procurement policies can not only help address internal and community policy goals, but also, result in significant cost savings. The starting point, of course, is to identify a consultant, staff person or intern who can serve as project lead for evaluating and adapting purchasing policies. Although an experienced project manager is helpful, a strong background in green procurement policy development isn't essential to beginning the process. Experienced staff will likely be needed at some point during the process, but substantial free guidance on setting up green procurement policies has already been developed by many reputable national leaders, such as the National Association of Counties, League of Cities and the United States Environmental Protection. Appendix A has the resources needed to begin developing a green procurement policy and internal procurement analysis.

Appendix A: Resources

Understanding Green Procurement

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Green Government Initiative: <http://www.naco.org/programs/csd/pages/greenuscommunities.aspx>
Green Purchasing: <http://www.naco.org/programs/csd/Pages/NACoGreenPurchasing.aspx>

League of Cities, Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Guide
http://www.nlc.org/File_Library/Find_City_Solutions/Research_Innovation/Sustainability/environmentally-preferable-purchasing-gid.pdf

LEAP GPP Toolkit (Developed for a European Audience, but lays out a strong process and good case studies.)
<http://www.leap-gpp-toolkit.org/index.php?id=104>

Contract Language, Specifications, and Policies

Environmental Protection Agency, Database of Environmental Information for Products and Services
<http://yosemite1.epa.gov/oppt/eppstand2.nsf/Pages/Search.html?Open>
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U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance, Go Green Program
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Appendix B: Summary of Product Survey Results

City of [anonymous] Product Feedback

Survey data collected: July, 2012

BioKleen Toilet Scrub (Used by: Public Services)

- Reported being *very satisfied* with the product's performance
- Reported the product worked *about the same* as the previous product used
- General comments: "*The toilet scrub worked very well, but felt there was a major flaw in packaging design in that both bottles [toilet scrub and soy cream cleaner] look identical except for the name. Easy to confuse and cleaning a table with a toilet cleanser has an "ugh" factor, whether real or imagined.*"



BioKleen Soy Cream Cleaner (Used by: Public Services)

- Reported feeling *neutral* about the product's performance
- Reported the product had *decreased performance* compared to previous product used
- General Comments: "*The general cleanser required way too much rinsing. The sink and table surfaces often appeared greasy after using just a dab and rinsing well.*"



Nesoil Bio-based Bar & Chain Oil (Used by: NAP and Forestry)

- Reported being *satisfied* with the product's performance
- Reported the product worked *about the same* as the previous product used
- General Comments: "*It works fine. Seems really thin in consistency, but it didn't leak out. Much prefer to use plant-based bar oil because it gets thrown onto clothes all the time. Safer for the operator as well as the planet etc. Would like to be able to set up an account with the company.*"

Franmar Hand Sanitizer Feedback

Public Event: May 19th, 2012

Number of people who sampled product: 350; 98 respondents

Data collected by City of [anonymous] staff

Key findings

- 90% rated Franmar Hand Sanitizer the *same or better* than other hand sanitizers they've used with regards to fragrance and feel
- 96% reported they were *more likely to purchase* Franmar compared to another non-soy-based hand sanitizer once they learned it was made from renewable materials.
- 90% *would recommend* Franmar Hand Sanitizer to a friend.