

Title:		Contents:	P-1050
PURCHASE OF ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE PRODUCTS (GREEN PURCHASING)		Submitted By:	Purchasing Division
		Approved By:	Purchasing Agent
Effective Date:	06-14-07	Supersedes No.:	P-1000
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Purpose

Los Angeles County is a very large consumer of goods and services and the purchasing decisions of our employees and contractors can positively or negatively affect the environment. By including environmental considerations in our procurement decisions, along with our traditional concerns with price, performance and availability, we will remain fiscally responsible while promoting practices that improve public health and safety, reduce pollution, and conserve natural resources. The purpose of this document is to establish the framework for establishing an environmentally based purchasing program for Los Angeles County.

Board Policy

On January 16, 2007, the Board of Supervisors adopted a Countywide Policy instructing that all County departments to implement the County's Energy and Environmental Programs for energy conservation and environmental stewardship (See Board of Supervisors Policy No. 3.045, Energy and Environmental Policy). To implement the County's "green" initiatives, County departments will be tasked to:

- Institute practices that reduce waste by increasing product efficiency and effectiveness;
- Purchase products that minimize environmental impacts, toxics, pollution, and hazards to worker and community safety to the greatest extent practicable, and to
- Purchase products that include recycled content, are durable and long-lasting, conserve energy and water, use agricultural fibers and residues, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, use unbleached or chlorine free manufacturing processes, and use wood from sustainable harvested forests.

To meet the Board's policy objectives, we must develop and implement procedures for the procurement of environmentally preferable (or "green") and energy efficient products and services.

Purchasing objectives will include acquisitions that:

- Conserve natural resources;
- Minimize environmental impacts such as pollution and use of water and energy;
- Eliminate or reduce toxics that create hazards to workers and our community;
- Support strong recycling markets;
- Reduce materials that are put into landfills;
- Increase the use and availability of environmentally preferable products that protect the environment;
- Encourage manufacturers and vendors to reduce environmental impacts in their production and distribution systems; and
- Create a model for successfully purchasing environmentally preferable products that encourages other purchasers in our community to adopt similar goals.

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In coordination with the County's Environment and Energy Team, ISD's Purchasing Division will have overall responsibility for this program. This will include establishing appropriate standards for green purchasing, assessing cost effectiveness and making recommendations related to acquisition strategies and maintaining data and issuing reports related to the County's progress in environmental purchasing. These areas are further detailed in the attached procedures.

PURCHASING PROCEDURES AND STANDARDS

Defining Environmentally Preferable Products

All products for which the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) has established minimum recycled content standard guidelines, such as those for printing paper, office paper, janitorial supplies, construction, landscaping, miscellaneous, and non-paper office products, shall contain the highest post-consumer content practicable, but no less than the minimum recycled content standards established by the U.S. EPA Guidelines.

In general, environmentally preferable products and services are those that would have a reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products and services. More specifically, this comparison would include consideration of all phases of the product's life cycle, including raw materials acquisition, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, operation, maintenance and disposal, including potential for reuse or ability to be recycled.

In practice, the objective is to purchase products that have reduced environmental impact because of the way they are made, used, transported, stored, packaged and disposed of. It means looking for products that do not harm human health, are less polluting and that minimize waste, maximize use of bio-based or recycled materials, conserve energy and water, and reduce the consumption or disposal of hazardous materials. When determining whether a product is environmentally preferable, the following standards should be considered:

✓ Biobased	✓ Made from renewable materials
✓ Biodegradable	✓ Compostable
✓ Carcinogen-free	✓ Low toxicity
✓ Bioaccumulative toxic (PBT)-free	✓ Recycled content, Reusable
✓ Chlorofluorocarbon (CFC)-free	✓ Reduced packaging, Refurbished
✓ Heavy metal free (i.e., no lead, mercury, cadmium)	✓ Reduced greenhouse gas emission
✓ Low volatile organic compound (VOC) content	✓ Energy, Resource and Water efficient

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Purchasing Environmentally Preferable Products

County Purchasing Agent Responsibilities – General

In coordination with the County's Environment and Energy Team, ISD's Purchasing Division will be responsible for:

- Working with other governmental purchasing groups and agencies, such as U.S. Communities, NACO and CSAC to determine appropriate standards for green purchasing.
- Assigning central purchasing staff to evaluate various green products and to provide guidance and assistance to County departments.
- Developing and implementing a 5-year plan to phase in various categories of purchased goods under the green program umbrella. Relative easy to implement items (e.g., paper, cleaning supplies, etc.) will be implemented very early in the program.
- Heading up teams to evaluate various types of products where the cost differential is great and/or the products are not considered good substitutes.
- Assessing and making recommendations on the use of price preferences.
- Maintaining data and issuing reports related to the County's progress in environmental purchasing.
- Establishing central purchasing agreements with a catalogue of environmentally friendly and energy efficient products and to modify our existing agreement data bases for the easy identification of green products.

In establishing countywide commodity agreements, the County's Purchasing Agent will specify the requirement for environmentally preferable products where applicable, and will evaluate product alternatives where appropriate. This evaluation would include: consideration of total costs expected during the time a product is owned, including, but not limited to, acquisition, extended warranties, operation, supplies, maintenance, disposal costs and expected lifetime of a product(s) as compared to other alternatives.

In the evaluation and/or award process:

- ✓ Products that are durable, long lasting, reusable or refillable will be preferred whenever feasible.
- ✓ Wherever possible, suppliers of electronic equipment, including but not limited to computers, monitors, printers, and copiers, shall be requested to take back equipment for reuse or environmentally safe recycling when the County discards or replaces such equipment; and
- ✓ All suppliers shall be required, where applicable, to use and recycle packaging material used for product delivery.

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County Department Responsibility – General

Under the delegated authority of the County Purchasing Agent, departmental buyers are responsible to evaluate short-term and long-term costs in comparing product alternatives. Through Purchasing Agent agreements, Departments shall be required to:

1. Purchase only Recycled-Content Bond Paper in accordance with the Board of Supervisors instructions of September 7, 1999 instructions to all Departments.
2. Purchase Energy Efficient products in order to conserve electrical power, reduce peak power consumption, lower energy costs, provide market leadership and support energy-efficient purchasing by County government.
3. Review and use “green” product alternatives in County and other authorize government agreements provided on-line at: <http://www.uscommunities.org/gpa/green/grSupplier.htm>

Remanufactured Products

The County shall purchase remanufactured products such as laser toner cartridges, furniture, and equipment whenever practicable, but without reducing safety, quality or effectiveness.

Energy and Water Conserving Equipment

Where applicable, energy-efficient equipment shall be purchased with the most up-to-date energy efficiency functions. This includes, but is not limited to, high efficiency space heating systems and high efficiency space cooling equipment.

When practicable, the County shall replace inefficient lighting with energy efficient equipment.

Energy Star®

Energy Star is a labeling program derived from a partnership between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). All products displaying the Energy Star label meet Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) standards. Typically, this means that labeled products are in the top 25 percent of all similar products when ranked by energy efficiency, and use 25 to 50 percent less energy than their traditional counterparts.

Solicitation for Equipment or Products

Wherever practicable, when equipment or product purchases where FEMP recommended standards or Energy Star labeled products are available, County departments and agencies are expected to include an Energy-efficiency requirement component to their solicitation to purchase those products that meet the recommended standards. Examples of these products include computers, monitors, printers, photocopiers and facsimile machines.

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Sample Solicitation Language

“Notice to Bidder: In line with the County policy for the procurement of energy-efficient equipment and products, preference will be given to those products that meet the Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) standards or possess an Energy Star® label.”

For energy consuming products where there are no FEMP recommended criteria or Energy Star label, departments must consider the purchase products that conserve electrical power and/or natural gas to the maximum extent possible, based on minimum life-cycle costs.

Cost Analysis

Even where energy-efficient products have a higher purchase price than their less efficient counterparts, these products usually save money because they use less energy, often have a longer life, and typically incur less maintenance cost.

These savings, such as from lower energy bills, are achieved throughout the entire lifetime of the product. Thus, when deciding how much money an Energy Star labeled product will save, it is necessary to consider both initial cost (the purchase price) and the costs that will be incurred throughout the life of the product (such as energy and maintenance costs). This is known as Life Cycle Cost.

A listing of Energy Star approved products, as well as the formula for determining Life Cycle Cost is available through the ISD Purchasing web page or by access through the following Internet address:

<http://yosemite1.epa.gov/estar/consumers.nsf/content/officeequipment.htm>

Benefits

The benefits of purchasing Energy Stat labeled and FEMP recommended products include:

- Reduced energy costs without compromising quality or performance
- Significant return on investment
- Extended product life and decreased maintenance

Products purchased by the County, and for which the U. S. EPA Energy Star certification is available shall meet Energy Star certification, when practicable. When Energy Star labels are not available, energy efficient products shall be purchased that are in the upper 25% of energy efficiency as designated by the Federal Energy Management Program.

The County shall purchase water-saving products whenever practicable.

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Note: Nothing contained in this policy shall be construed as requiring a department to procure products that do not perform adequately for their intended use, exclude adequate competition, or are not available at a reasonable price in a reasonable period of time.

Landscaping

Workers and contractors providing landscaping services for the County shall be encouraged to employ sustainable landscape management practices whenever possible, including, but not limited to, integrated pest management, grass-cycling, drip irrigation, composting, and procurement and use of mulch and compost that give preference to those produced from regionally generated plant debris and/or food waste programs.

Plants should be selected to minimize waste by choosing species that are appropriate to the micro-climate species that can grow to their natural size in the space allotted them and perennials rather than annuals for color. Native and drought-tolerant plants that require no or minimal watering once established are preferred.

Hardscapes and landscape structures constructed of recycled content materials are encouraged.

Toxins and Pollutants

To the extent practicable, no cleaning or disinfecting products (i.e. for janitorial use) shall contain ingredients that are carcinogens, mutagens, or teratogens. These include chemicals listed by the U.S. EPA or the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health on the Toxics Release Inventory and those listed under Proposition 65 by the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment.

When maintaining buildings, the County shall use the lowest amount of VOCs (volatile organic compounds), highest recycled content, and low or no formaldehyde when purchasing materials such as paint, carpeting, adhesives, furniture and casework.

The County shall reduce or eliminate its use of products that contribute to the formation of dioxins and furans. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Purchasing paper, paper products, and janitorial paper products that are unbleached or that are processed without chlorine or chlorine derivatives, whenever possible.
- Eliminating the purchase of products that use polyvinyl chloride (PVC) such as, but not limited to, office binders, furniture and flooring, whenever practicable.

Agricultural Bio-Based Products

Paper, paper products and construction products made from non-wood, plant-based contents such as agricultural crops and residues are encouraged whenever practicable.

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Balancing Environmentally Considerations with Performance, Availability and Financial Cost

Los Angeles County is committed to procuring environmentally preferable goods and services wherever they meet performance standards and requirements of the County at a competitive cost. Nothing in this policy shall be construed as requiring a purchaser or contractor to procure products that do not perform adequately for their intended use, exclude adequate competition, or are not available at a reasonable price or in a reasonable period of time.

However, when comparing product costs, the County does not focus exclusively on the quoted vendor pricing but also the costs over the life of the product, which includes the initial cost along with maintenance, operating, insurance, disposal, recycle or replacement, and potential liability costs. Examining life cycle costs will save money by ensuring we are quantifying the total cost of ownership before making purchasing decisions.

Conservation and Waste Reduction

Wherever practicable and cost-effective, departments are responsible to institute practices that reduce waste and result in the purchase of fewer products without reducing safety or workplace quality.

Examples would include:

- ✓ Using electronic communication instead of printed,
- ✓ Using double-sided photocopying and printing,
- ✓ Using washable and reusable dishes and utensils,
- ✓ Using rechargeable batteries,
- ✓ Streamlining and computerizing forms,
- ✓ Using "on-demand" printing of documents and reports as they are needed,
- ✓ Leasing long-life products when service agreements support maintenance and repair rather than new purchases,
- ✓ Choosing durable products rather than disposable,
- ✓ Buying in bulk, when storage and operations exist to support it,
- ✓ Re-using products such as, but not limited to, file folders, storage boxes, office supplies, and furnishings.

Departmental Responsibilities

Every County department is responsible to ensure that their respective employees, contractors, and vendors are fully aware and supportive of the County's initiative to purchase environmentally preferable goods and services. To this end, departments are responsible to exercise due diligence in their procurement decisions as well procurements made by their contractors and consultants, promoting the purchase and use environmentally preferable products whenever cost effective, and to the extent practicable for all work completed on behalf of Los Angeles County.