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# News Release

For Immediate Release

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## Two-state effort reduces public exposure to toxic chemicals

**Salem, Ore., July 30:** Government offices and schools across the Northwest will be healthier places to work and visit thanks to a new “green” janitorial supplies contract developed by Oregon’s [Department of Administrative Services](#) in partnership with Washington’s [Department of Enterprise Services](#).

The contract -- developed with support from the [Oregon Department of Environmental Quality](#), [Washington Department of Ecology](#) and [Responsible Purchasing Network](#) -- will supply public agencies with people- and planet-friendly janitorial supplies that reduce the use of toxic chemicals without increasing costs.

Reducing toxic threats is a top priority for both states and they are leveraging purchasing power to find solutions that protect both the economy and the environment. Oregon and Washington agencies spend more than \$20 million on janitorial supplies annually. The market impacts of this contract go beyond state purchasing as local governments and public schools may also take advantage of the price agreements.

“Government purchasing is a big economic driver. By encouraging the design and use of more responsible products, we can boost our economy while promoting better public health,” said Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber. “When states buy green goods and services that are comparable in quality, availability and cost to traditional ones, it’s a triple win.”

Oregon Executive Order No. 12-05, signed in April 2012 by Kitzhaber, calls on state agencies to support the advancement of green chemistry in Oregon through multiple strategies, including new state purchasing policies focused on less toxic products.

In Washington, Executive Order 04-01 directs all state agencies to purchase equipment, supplies and other products that do not contain persistent, toxic chemicals unless there is no feasible alternative.

“Environmentally-preferred doesn't mean green at any cost,” said Washington Gov. Jay Inslee. “We want goods and services that get the job done, at a fair price, with less harm to people and the environment – that’s best value for state taxpayers.”

The Department of Administrative Services negotiated prices with Coastwide Laboratories, Waxie Sanitary Supply, Interline Brands and West Coast Paper to provide government customers in both states with an extensive catalog of environmentally preferable products. The new price agreements begin Aug. 1, 2013 and may be extended in two-year increments until 2018.

The contract offers a comprehensive approach to green cleaning that includes low environmental impact cleaning products, tools, equipment, consultation and training.

“In the past, there was a perception that green products cost more and didn’t work as well, said Michael Jordan, State of Oregon Chief Operations Officer. “That has changed. Green janitorial products cost the same or less than traditional ones and are just as effective.”

Both states are pursuing less toxic products without compromising effectiveness or increasing costs. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency defines environmentally preferable purchasing as products or services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose. Best value is the right balance of price, quality, performance and environmental protection achieved through competitive procurement methods over the life of the purchased good or service.

“This model contract for certified ‘green’ cleaners is a successful and pioneering initiative that we hope other states will replicate,” said Alicia Culver, Executive Director of the Responsible Purchasing Network (RPN). “It will protect custodial workers and building occupants – particularly children – from becoming exposed to chemicals than can cause asthma and other serious health hazards.” RPN developed the environmental specifications for this solicitation under a contract with the National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO).

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