

South Bay Cities Council of Governments/South Bay Environmental Services Center

GREEN PURCHASING AND GREEN BUSINESS PRACTICES POLICY

August, 2008

Purpose

The South Bay Cities Council of Governments/South Bay Environmental Services Center recognizes that the purchase and use of products and services can impact the environment. It is the SBCCOG/SBESC's intent to make a positive impact on the environment by integrating environmental considerations into purchasing decisions and office practices. By doing so, the SBCCOG/SBESC can promote practices that improve public and employee health, conserve natural resources, and reward environmentally conscious manufacturers, while remaining fiscally responsible.

Green Purchasing Policy

The SBCCOG/SBESC will seek to purchase products that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared to other products that serve the same purpose.

This means the SBCCOG/SBESC will seek to purchase products that have reduced environmental impact because of the way they are made, packaged, transported, used, and disposed of. It means looking for products that do not harm human health, are less polluting, reduce waste, use biobased or recycled materials, conserve energy and water and reduce consumption or disposal of hazardous materials.

Nothing contained in this policy requires the acquisition of goods or services 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.

Environmental Labeling and Certification Programs

Given the complexity of identifying environmentally preferable products, the SBCCOG/SBESC recognizes a role for independent accredited third-party organizations to establish standards and identify recommended products. Accordingly, the SBCCOG/SBESC will give preference to products certified by Green Seal¹, Energy Star², EcoLogo³, or EPEAT⁴.

Purchasing Policies

Leasing Space: When seeking to renew the SBCCOG/SBESC lease, we will look for opportunities to work with the building management on promoting sound environmental practices of energy and water conservation as well as recycling.

¹ Green Seal is an independent, non-profit environmental labeling organization (www.greenseal.org).

² Energy Star is a voluntary energy efficiency labeling program derived from a partnership between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy. Typically, labeled products are in the top 25% of all similar products when ranked by energy efficiency (www.energystar.gov).

³ EcoLogo is an environmental standard and certification organization (www.ecologo.org).

⁴ EPEAT (Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool) is a tool to compare desktop computers, notebooks, and monitors based on their environmental attributes. Standards are being prepared for other electronic equipment (www.epeat.net).

Office Paper. Paper for copiers, printers, letterhead, notepads, envelopes and business cards must contain at least 50 percent post-consumer recycled content.

Other Paper Products. Paper towels, toilet paper and similar products must contain at least 30 percent post-consumer recycled content.

Cleaning Products. Cleaning products must be certified by Green Seal or EcoLogo.

Electrical Equipment and Appliances. New electrical equipment or appliances must meet Energy Star standards.

Computer Equipment. New computers, monitors, or other electronic equipment must meet the highest feasible EPEAT certification level.

Green Business Practices Policy

The SBCCOG/SBESC will seek to implement practices that limit waste and promote environmental responsibility. Specifically, the SBCCOG/SBESC will:

- Implement an effective system for recycling paper and cardboard products.
- Encourage the use of recycled cardboard boxes, 59% post-consumer waste.
- Implement an effective system for recycling cans, glass and plastic.
- Eliminate the use of plastic bags at events.
- Promote the use of compostable paper cups made from fully renewable resources
- Establish as practice two-sided printing and copying.
- Encourage recycling toner cartridges.
- Encourage the use of white paper rather than colored paper. When colored paper is appropriate, preference will be given to pastel colors rather than dark or fluorescent colors.
- Encourage distribution of information electronically rather than in hard copy.
- Encourage the use of “sleep mode” for computers to save energy.
- Discourage the unnecessary printing of electronic communications or other information that can be stored electronically.
- Discourage the use of bottled water in the office or at SBCCOG/SBESC meetings and instead promote the use of water pitchers.
- Encourage staff members to carpool to off-site SBCCOG/SBESC meetings and workshops.
- Implement policies that encourage staff members to use public transit, walk or bicycle to work.
- Encourage staff members to turn off lights, computers, monitors, printers, copiers and other equipment when not in use, especially at the end of each workday.
- Welcome recommendations from staff members and others to identify appropriate and effective business practices that are environmentally responsible.