



Bay Area Hazardous Waste Management Facility Allocation Committee

Administered by:
Association of Bay Area Governments

101 Eighth Street, Oakland, CA 94607-4756
<http://www.abag.ca.gov/hazwaste>

P. O. Box 2050, Oakland, CA 94604-2050
510/464-7961

Date: May 25, 2012
To: Hazardous Waste Management Facility Allocation Committee
From: Ceil Scandone, Senior Regional Planner
Re: Sustainable Purchasing

As a means of promoting pollution prevention among government agencies in the Bay Area, and complementing the state's Green Chemistry efforts, the Committee directed staff several years ago to promote Environmentally Preferable or Sustainable Purchasing practices. A variety of activities have been undertaken over the past 5 years, with Committee approval, as described below.

Staff is recommending in the proposed Budget and Work Plan that for Fiscal Year 2012/13 we try a new approach that would involve tracking and developing short case studies on a few promising efforts that are underway around the region. These would be added to the Committee Environmental Purchasing webpage. This memo is intended to provide context for that recommendation.

Background

As a first step, in 2007 staff researched and added to the Committee website at <http://www.abag.ca.gov/hazwaste/environmentallypreferablepurchasing.html> a listing of Environmental Purchasing policies. In 2008, a work group of public agency purchasing experts and consultants was established to help staff develop a more active role in informing ABAG members and others about Sustainable Purchasing and motivating them to take action. The group recommended that we hold a series of workshops to inform public agency purchasers of the benefits and begin to instruct them on the process of developing sustainable purchasing policies and programs.

Three workshops have been held. Approximately 120 people attended the first workshop in March 2009, which focused on *why* to implement sustainable purchasing. The second workshop, which was held in October 2010, drew 60 people and focused on *how to initiate* sustainable purchasing through policies, programs and prioritization. The third event, which was held in November 2011, drew 50 people and featured *sustainable purchasing practices that save time and money*.

With each workshop we have attempted to get deeper into the subject matter. While attendance has declined, the engagement has been excellent and the evaluations positive. However, each year it has been more difficult to line up speakers and attract an audience large enough to justify the consultant fees and staff time.

Following a post-workshop debriefing with our consultant Alicia Culver of the Responsible Purchasing Network, and conversations with work group members, we believe that in order to more effectively institutionalize sustainable purchasing it might be time to engage directly with local governments that are ready to go deeper, e.g. to adopt a policy; green one or more product categories; join a cooperative purchasing effort..

In subsequent conversations with work group members, staff was able to identify a few interesting subregional efforts that are currently underway, that might provide good models for similar groups of agencies, or individual jurisdictions, interested in sustainable purchasing. Those are listed and briefly described below.

Alameda County General Services Agency

Karen Cook, Sustainability Project Manager with Alameda County General Services Agency, has convened staff from Alameda County cities and other public agencies as a work group to consider how to move Sustainable Purchasing forward in the county. Staff from 6 or 7 jurisdictions, including cities, StopWaste.Org and East Bay Regional Park District have attended the meetings.

At this point, the group is providing a forum for learning and information sharing. This has proved to be valuable since different people have experience with different product types. Karen's concept is to eventually select a couple of products and try to get all participants to move forward on those. Office Supplies and Green Information Technology are potential product categories.

One outcome might be to negotiate a market basket of office products with a particular vendor that allows other jurisdictions to "piggyback" on the contract. Here is an excerpt from Alameda County's Fact Sheet *Tips for Piggybacking on Alameda County Contracts* that describes the process and its benefits:

What is Piggybacking

Piggybacking is when a public agency uses an existing public contract as a template to form their own contract directly with the vendor to purchase on the same or similar terms. Your agency does not become a signatory to, or participate in, the original contract but instead negotiates a new contract with the vendor based on the initial public entity's contract.

Benefits of Piggybacking

You may be able to save time and resources by leveraging Alameda County's successful competitive bidding process. And our volume pricing and county policies for environmentally preferable purchasing and local procurement mean you may get best value while supporting a local green economy.

Karen recommended that if ABAG staff continue to work on sustainable purchasing, we do something specific to a particular product category, get all the right people in the room, and develop tools/resources/guidance that could benefit all. Karen was open to

having ABAG staff attend their meetings to observe and document them. While it is too early in the process to gauge the direction and potential success, a case study of the Alameda County effort could benefit other groups of jurisdictions at the county or subregional levels.

Santa Clara County

Karen Gissibl, City of Sunnyvale Recycling Manager, is leading a Santa Clara County Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission sub-committee that is exploring the potential for Santa Clara County jurisdictions to eliminate use of expanded polystyrene (EPS) packaging by suppliers shipping products to their jurisdictions. Cities of Palo Alto and San Jose worked with Alicia Culver of the Responsible Purchasing Network to find out how much EPS is coming into their cities. The amount is declining for some products – e.g. toner cartridges. However computers, glass, other products are packaged in EPS.

They have developed some tools to address elimination of EPS, such as vendor letter templates and boiler plate specification language; gotten examples of policies and programs; and identified alternative packaging materials to recommend. Sunnyvale is considering rewriting its Environmentally Preferable Purchasing policy to address packaging.

At the April meeting of the Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission, the Commission asked the team to come back with a complete package that can be posted/circulated to all in the County. Staff anticipates the package could be ready by autumn of 2012. Documenting the Santa Clara County effort, and making the case study and tools available on the Committee website, could be valuable for other jurisdictions interested in eliminating EPS from packaging.

Napa County

Jeff Brooner, Napa County Purchasing Manager and Amy Garden, Napa County Recycling Program reported that their sustainable purchasing program has progressed slowly. They have implemented some policies; their Sustainability Council meets and does good work. They have gained useful information.

They have been successful with:

- recycled content computer and copier paper.
- recycled carpet.
- recycled paper products in restrooms.

The Napa County ordinance said their Sustainability Council would meet with relevant purchasing agents in the county. The original focus was on energy conservation and waste reduction. So they picked paper for its recycled content. Rechargeable batteries are also a focus.

Napa County has had good success with recycled paper and is sharing its experience with the City. The City of Napa has had success with remanufactured toner cartridges and is sharing with the County.

Amy and Jeff thought that identifying and sharing success stories with other local agencies, e.g. who switched to remanufactured toner cartridges successfully; what they did; performance; cost savings, etc. would be valuable. They also offered the following suggestions for future consideration if resources permit:

- Do a survey, identify the purchasing construct in each county/city: who purchases what in each jurisdiction; how centralized/ decentralized works for them; what are the challenges. If a jurisdiction has an EPP policy, how is it implemented?

Purchasing manager might be the gatekeeper, but can encourage other purchasers to get educated about products and services.

- ID / work with government and other professional peer organizations. E.g. California Association of Public Procurement Officials, Public Fleet Supervisors Association.

Conclusion

Based on the conversations with our consultant and advisors, staff has included in the Budget and Work Plan a recommendation that during Fiscal Year 2012/13 we monitor and document at least the efforts described in this memo. Brief case studies would be posted on the Committee website. The information currently on the site, which dates back to 2007, would be reviewed and refreshed. It is likely that jurisdictions in the Bay Area and elsewhere have updated or created new sustainable purchasing policies in the last 5 years that could be useful models for our members.