



CITY OF LOMITA CITY COUNCIL REPORT

TO: City Council

FROM: Michael Rock, City Manager

PREPARED BY: Gary Y. Sugano, Assistant City Manager

MEETING DATE: January 7, 2013

SUBJECT: Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

Item No. 7.7

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution supporting Extended Producer Responsibility.

BACKGROUND

The mission of the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC) is to shift the state's product waste management system from one focused on local government funded and ratepayer financed waste diversion to a system that relies on producer responsibility in order to reduce public costs and drive further improvements in product design that will promote environmental sustainability.

The CPSC is a coalition of local government, their associations and organizations related to solid waste, recycling, resource conservation, environmental protection, water quality and other cross-media issues. Together with non-government organizations (NGOs) individuals, and businesses across California they form a network supporting product stewardship and extended producer responsibility (EPR). CPSC is a federally recognized 501(c) 3 non-profit public benefit California corporation.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that approximately 75 percent of today's waste stream comes from manufactured products – from common household items such as televisions, cell phones, personal computers, fluorescent lights and batteries to household hazardous waste products like paint and pesticides. Electronics contain lead, cadmium, and other toxic heavy metals that pose a threat to public health and the environment when improperly disposed. Other products also contain toxic constituents, such as the mercury contained in fluorescent lights or some thermostats and switches. Other products are packaged with problematic materials that cannot be recycled and packaging can be excessive. Still other products, such as hypodermic needles and other "sharps" can and do injure the public and sanitation workers when improperly disposed.

Our waste has changed dramatically over the last 100 years but the responsibility for managing the end-of-life (EOL) of these product wastes has fallen on local and county governments. This “externalization” of costs does not allow the proper market signals to reach product designers or consumers to reduce these costs. This cost externalization results in many products that are actually designed for disposal, rather than reuse or recycling. It is both the toxicity of the waste stream and the volume of waste that is of concern to government. Ratepayers and taxpayers are financing costly collection infrastructure and programs which could be more cost-effectively managed in the private sector.

Local governments throughout the state must meet increasing environmental mandates, including reducing the waste that goes to landfills and preventing hazardous waste from being improperly disposed of. The burden of waste reduction and diversion has fallen to consumers and local governments, often with no funding to help reach the mandated goals. Manufacturers do not currently have a legal requirement to take responsibility for the impact of their products on the environment or on public health after the productions have been used or consumed. There are a handful of manufacturers who have taken seriously their impact on the environment and have then chosen to reduce or change the makeup and/or packaging of their products.

EPR offers a solution by engaging producers in the lifecycle management of their products and to take responsibility for the proper management of products. Instead of requiring local governments to fund collection and recovery programs, EPR establishes performance goals for recycling programs that are designed and implemented by producers and ensures the cost of recovery is reflected in the cost of the product creating a sustainable funding source – a user pays system instead of externalizing the costs onto taxpayers and ratepayers. Furthermore, internalizing the costs of EOL management into the cost of the product provides an incentive for producers to “design it green”, thereby reducing the environmental impact of the product. EPR recognizes that all stakeholders share some responsibility, but the producer has the greatest responsibility because only they can change the design of products. EPR does not stipulate *how* producers must take responsibility, but rather that they *must if they sell the product in California*. This gives producers the flexibility to design programs that work for their product and business model. Producers may choose to utilize existing recycling facilities, haulers, and programs, or to work with existing distribution networks to create “reverse distribution,” or mail-back systems.

There is widespread support for EPR. CalRecycle adopted an EPR policy framework in January 2008 as the basis for future legislation. The framework concept would allow multiple products to be regulated under one law, as opposed to the costly and time consuming product-by-product legislation of the past. To date, 131 jurisdictions and agencies have adopted EPR resolutions including the County of Los Angeles and the cities of Torrance and Carson.

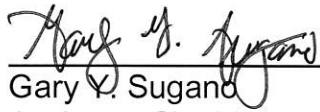
OPTIONS:

1. Approve the resolution.
2. Do not approve the resolution.
3. Provide further direction.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact.

Prepared by:



Gary Y. Sugano
Assistant City Manager

Approved by:



Michael Rock
City Manager

Attachment
Resolution