

Vermont Product Stewardship Council Initiative Recommendations for EPR Program

December 3, 2008

Request legislative support in the development of recommendations for establishing a comprehensive product stewardship program to implement extended producer responsibility (EPR) and reduce environmental and health risks posed by the use or disposal of consumer products.

The recommendations shall include, at a minimum:

- a set of criteria to be used to evaluate products proposed for product stewardship solutions;
- a process for designating products for product stewardship solutions and the role the legislature would play in that process;
- typical components of product stewardship plans;
- options to facilitate the creation of industry-managed stewardship management organizations;
- method(s) to identify and monitor progress toward stewardship performance goals for specific products; and strategies to implement the use of standards, certifications, and eco-labels to promote environmentally preferable products.

To the extent possible, the recommendations should be consistent with existing product stewardship programs in North America.

In developing the recommendations, the DEC Secretary/Commissioner shall consult with interested parties (manufacturers, retailers, recyclers, environmental advocacy organizations and local units of government).

While criteria used to select products/product categories would be determined within the regulatory process following enactment of statute, there are some general concepts that should be addressed in that process. The list below includes factors that would likely be addressed during this process, although it is not meant to be exhaustive or prescriptive nor is it presented in order of importance:

- The cost to local governments for the handling and disposal of the products including volume of materials disposed in landfills and existing problems with illegal dumping;
- The quantity of the products entering the waste stream including usage trends (increasing, decreasing, steady);
- The toxicity (hazard to human health or the environment) of the product and the potential for net lifecycle impact improvement;
- The level of market/infrastructure currently in place and potential for private sector participation in voluntary product stewardship programs and activities;
- The effectiveness of programs currently in place and the potential for mandatory action or legislative support to encourage the development of product stewardship programs;
- The potential for innovation in design that would result in an environmentally sound and sustainable product.