



Northwest Product Stewardship Council

NWPSC Council Mission & Objectives December 2008

The **Northwest Product Stewardship Council (NWPSC)** is a coalition of government organizations in Washington and Oregon that operates as an unincorporated association of members and is comprised of a Steering Committee, Associates and Subcommittees.

Mission: The mission of the NWPSC is to work together and with other governments, businesses and nonprofit groups to integrate product stewardship (producer responsibility) principles into the policy and economic structures of the Pacific Northwest.

The Council is working to shift Washington and Oregon's product waste management system from one focused on government funded and ratepayer financed waste disposal and waste diversion to one that relies on producer responsibility in order to reduce public costs, increase accessibility to services, attain higher environmental benefits and drive improvements in product design that promote environmental sustainability.

Product Stewardship: Product Stewardship is an environmental management strategy that means whoever designs, produces, sells, or uses a product takes responsibility for minimizing the product's environmental impact throughout all stages of the products' life cycle, including end of life management. The greatest responsibility lies with whoever has the most ability to affect the full life cycle environmental impacts of the product. This is most often the producer of the product, though all within the product chain of commerce have roles.

Product Stewardship (PS) and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) are terms used interchangeably to describe a long-term solution to manage waste products by shifting the responsibility for collection, transportation, and management of products away from local governments to the manufacturers. (taken from the Sonoma County Extended Producer Responsibility Implementation Plan, R3 Consulting Group, Inc., Jan 26, 2007)

Objectives:

The objectives of the Northwest Product Stewardship Council are to:

- Develop and recommend product stewardship policies to organizations, institutions and governments
- Provide effective leadership on product stewardship initiatives in the region
- Assist in coordinating product stewardship efforts in the Northwest and with national product stewardship initiatives whenever possible
- Educate elected officials and other decision makers on the benefits to local government of product stewardship

Steering Committee: Members of the Steering Committee are representatives of government agencies that provide funding and/or staff time to NWPSC product stewardship activities and project.

Associates: Associates are local, state, regional and federal governments, agencies, associations, businesses and nonprofit groups that support the NWPSC mission and product stewardship principles. Associates have access to a NWPSC list serve discussion group and can participate in any of the subcommittee projects and programs.

Subcommittees: The 2008 Subcommittees are: Electronics, Policy, Mercury, Paint, Beverage Containers/Packaging, Pharmaceuticals, Tires, and Chemicals Policy Subcommittee.

Definition of Key Terms:

(Modified for the NWPSC from California Integrated Waste Management Board's Attachment 1: Overall Framework for an Extended Producer Responsibility System in California)

Extended Producer Responsibility¹ - (EPR) is the extension of the responsibility of producers, and all entities involved in the product chain, to reduce the cradle-to-cradle impacts of a product and its packaging. The greatest responsibility lies with the producer, or brand owner, who makes design and marketing decisions.

This definition is similar to the definition used by the Product Stewardship Institute in recognizing a shared responsibility, but one that lies mostly with the producer. The reference to the product chain refers to suppliers, manufacturers, retailers, users and recyclers. EPR focuses on enhancing environmental benefits through improved product design for reduction and reuse, and increased collection and recycling where needed, without transferring end-of-life management problems elsewhere.

Producer - This term is fundamental to any discussion on EPR, yet it is challenging to define for all products. In order to have a common understanding of the term, the general working definition below is offered with recognition that a more refined definition would be needed for a product stewardship program that is focused on a particular product or product category. Product-specific definitions of the term producer need to be legally binding if all producers are to be held to the same ground rules.

Producer means:

- i. a person who manufactures a product and sells, offers for sale or distributes the product in (state) under the manufacturer's own brand
- ii. if subparagraph (i) does not apply, a person who is not the manufacturer of the product but is the owner or licensee of a trade mark under which a product is sold or distributed in (state), whether or not the trademark is registered, or
- iii. if subparagraphs (i) and (ii) do not apply, a person who imports the product into (state) for sale or distribution.

Product Stewardship Program - This is a term that is used by provinces in Canada and the NWPSC believes using the same term in Washington and Oregon would be helpful to be consistent in our communications, particularly for those stakeholders operating throughout North America.

Product Stewardship Program is a program that encompasses product design for source reduction and reuse, as well as the collection, transportation, recycling, and disposal of unwanted products, including legacy products and the program's fair share of orphan products, which is financed as well as managed or provided by the producers of those products.

Stewardship Organization - Several terms are used to describe an entity that works on behalf of the producer to implement its responsibilities such as Third Party Organization (TPO), Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO), and Stewardship Organization (SO). A Stewardship Organization is a corporation appointed by a producer to act as an agent on behalf of the producer to administer a product stewardship program.

¹ California Integrated Waste Management Board, *Producer Responsibility: Overview of Policy Considerations, Background Paper*, Prepared for the Strategic Policy Committee, June 5 2007, Pages 12-15. Available at: www.ciwmb.ca.gov/agendas/mtgdocs/2007/06/00022104.doc