



Northwest Product Stewardship Council

2008 Council Leftover Paint Background Paper

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Subcommittee Name: Leftover Paint Product Stewardship

Subcommittee Members:

Hasina Wong; Snohomish County (WA) Health Dept
Jim Quinn; Portland (OR) Metro
Jonnel Fenton-Wallace; Snohomish County (WA) Health Dept.
Lauren H. Cole King County (WA) Solid Waste
Maggie Conley; OR Dept. of Environmental Quality
Mike O'Donnell; Philip Services
Rick Gilbert; Kitsap County (WA) Public Works, Solid Waste
Scott Klag; Portland (OR) Metro
Sego Jackson; Snohomish County (WA) Solid Waste
Albert Salvi; WA Dept. of Ecology
Dick Lilly; City of Seattle Solid Waste;
Lisa Sepanski; King County (WA) Solid Waste
David Nightingale; WA Dept. of Ecology
Scott Windsor; City of Spokane

The Issue

Local and state government have developed Household Hazardous Waste collection systems to manage materials which are inappropriate to dispose of in the traditional municipal solid waste stream. One of the largest parts of this materials stream is leftover paint. Most leftover paint is a free-flowing liquid which are supposed to be diverted from landfills. Oil-based paints present potential hazards of poisoning and fire hazards to the public and sanitation workers. Oil-based paints are recycled in at least two Canadian Provinces and are used as a substitute fuel in many areas in North America. Latex paints are not flammable but are still liquid (inappropriate for direct landfill disposal) and have the potential to be recycled with minimal processing into quality paint. The Paint Subcommittee recognizes that:

- There are an estimated 64 million gallons of leftover paint in the US every year.
- Paints collected at local HHW programs are a significant logistic and financial burden for local governments.
- Methods exist to efficiently recycle or otherwise recover the resources embodied in most leftover paints.
- Portland Metro has demonstrated that 60-70% of latex paint can be recycled into quality paint meeting performance standards (as developed by the Master Painters' Institute) and environmental standards by GreenSeal® (see the combined [GreenSeal Standard GS-43](#)).
- Portland Metro has demonstrated that regional facilities which recycle latex and send oil-based paint for energy recovery can be almost entirely self supporting through the local marketing of recycled paint thereby, reducing system costs of management of all leftover paints.
- Private paint recycling operators in the US and Canada have been operating successfully for many years and their expertise needs to be used to develop optimized solutions.

The NWPSC Position

The paint industry needs to become a partner with existing local and state programs in order to reduce the generation of leftover paint, to manage leftover paint in a nationally-coordinated system and to share the responsibility for financing and managing programs to recover leftover paint.

- Leftover paint should be reduced to the extent possible by educating consumers to maximize the proper use of that commodity and in keeping with typical waste management hierarchies
- Leftover paint is generated by virtually every household and small business in the northwest. Consequently, the collection of leftover paint (paint not reused) must be provided throughout the northwest states at no cost to the customer at the time of collection.
- The opportunities for leftover paint collection in the northwest is currently inadequate and needs to be expanded through an industry-led system, beyond the existing government sponsored programs, to provide consistently-convenient collection opportunities.
- The virgin and recycling paint industries have the knowledge to create a nationally-coordinated leftover paint system with the potential to capture and use the resources in leftover paint as shown in the [Paint Product Stewardship Initiative \(PPSI\) Infrastructure Project](#), March 2007
- Leftover paint should be recycled into new paint to the extent possible (60-70% of latex) and sold at market prices in order to support a nationally-coordinated paint infrastructure system for all leftover paint
- Financing of the nationally-coordinated system must rely primarily on funding from the paint industry rather than from local government.

Proposed Solution/Recommendations

- Continue to actively participate in and support the national Paint Product Stewardship Initiative (PPSI) so long as demonstrated progress is being made toward the development of a industry-led nationally-coordinated paint management system. This new system must rely primarily on industry funding as the product steward although it is likely that most local and state programs will provide ready partnership opportunities with existing programs such as cooperative educational outreach campaigns and coordination of leftover paint collection activities.
- The leftover paint management system needs to establish clear measurable goals and milestone schedules to gage progress and appropriate levels of effort over time in concert with PPSI government representatives and based on the infrastructure report and experience
- Consider regional or statewide actions such as legislative solutions if the national PPSI process stalls or is dissolved prior to development of an industry-led nationally-coordinated leftover paint management system.

Subcommittee Next Steps

- Continue to support the adoption by NW jurisdictions of the second Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the PPSI stakeholder group.
- Continue to provide representation to the PPSI process through the implementation of the second MOU.
- Keep local and state governments and local business and NGOs aware of the progress of the national PPSI process.
- Support the roll-out of the nationally-coordinated leftover paint management system in the northwest. This is an ongoing task that includes a workgroup of government and industry participants cooperatively preparing for the roll out of the nationally-coordinated paint management system in Oregon and Washington.