



SF Environment
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2011 Annual Report: Buy Green Ordinance Program for City Staff

Presented to the San Francisco Commission on the Environment

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(List of City staff that bought green, limited use, or prohibited batteries, computers, cleaners, lighting available at SFApproved.org/citystaff).

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I. Executive Summary

SFE and Office of Contract Administration (OCA) lead the implementation of the ordinance requiring City staff to buy green products listed on SFApproved.org. Green products can be less-toxic, energy-efficient and made with recycled or recyclable materials. In 2011, 83% of \$3.6 million dollars of purchases by the City were green in the targeted categories of computers, cleaners, lighting, and batteries (according to sales reports from Citywide contracted vendors). The percentage of green computers and computer servers increased from 81% in 2010 to 88% in 2011. SFE also improved SF Approved.org so users can rate products and share any page on social media.

II. Introduction

A. *History and Mandate*

San Francisco has been buying green since the 1980s, but purchasing requirements were scattered among several ordinances. In 1998, the City launched the [Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Pilot Program](#) which:

- Inventoried and assessed hazardous chemical products bought by City departments
- Established environmental and health criteria
- Compared costs between green and conventional products
- Set priorities and field tested products with City departments

In 2003, San Francisco became the first city in the nation to adopt the [Precautionary Principle](#). That means, based on the best available science, the City must buy products that present the least potential threat to our health and the environment. In 2005, San Francisco enacted the [Precautionary Purchasing Ordinance](#) (Environment Code, Chapt. 2). This ordinance was groundbreaking in requiring City funds to be used for approved alternative (“green”) products, now summarized at SFApproved.org. The Ordinance also consolidated disparate green purchasing requirements in one place in the Environment Code.

B. *Development of Green Product Specifications*

SFE works with City departments and OCA to develop green specifications for City commodity and service contracts. These specifications consist of recommendations for products to be certified by third-party ecolabels, such as Energy Star or Green Seal, or include lists of specific products. After contracts are awarded, green products and specifications are listed on SFApproved.org. Our primary goals for product selection are maximum performance, minimum impact, and lowest cost:

1. Performance: Does the product work well? Is it durable? Does it make efficient use of resources? SFE works with City staff and established Green Teams to obtain information on product performance.
2. Impact: SFE takes the lead role in assessing impacts on our health and environment.
3. Cost: Is it cost-effective in its manufacturing, use and disposal (life cycle) compared to its alternatives? Office of Contract Administration is responsible for obtaining the best possible prices on City purchases.

SF Approved products fall into four categories: Required, Suggested, Limited Use, and Prohibited.

- **Required green products.** These products meet all goals above and can save money because they are in City contracts. “Required” products generally meet all three goals above (performance, impact and cost effectiveness). Departments are required to buy *only* these products.
- **Suggested green products.** These products meet San Francisco’s environmental and health criteria. Some products may need more research on cost or performance. City departments are encouraged to try these products and rate them at SFApproved.org so they might be included in future contracts.
- **Limited use products** are permitted for purchase only when required or suggested products do not meet performance requirements; for example, some less-efficient light bulbs may be permitted until a retrofit of light fixtures can be completed.
- **Prohibited products** are sometimes listed on SFApproved.org to remind purchasers of existing mandates prohibiting their use; for example, magnetic ballasts are specifically prohibited for new lighting installations. However, not all prohibited products are listed.

C. *Summary of Past Annual Reports*

Table A shows the amount of green products the City has bought over the years.

D. Staff That Worked on Green Citywide Contracts in 2011

OCA: Bill Jones, Deirdre Darley, Galen Leung, Jaci Fong, Jennifer Browne, Judy Wong, Ken Easton, Pamela Olivier
SFE: Chris Geiger, Jessian Choy, Julie Bryant, Soko Made

II. Accomplishments

A. City Staff That Bought Green or Prohibited Products

SFE lists the purchases made by City staff (page 6), which allows SFE to:

- Thank and give green prizes to staff that bought green.
- Ask staff why they bought limited use or prohibited products. If they say a green product didn't work, then SFE can do more research. About 90% of 150 staff from 38 departments said they would recommend the Buy Green Consultation which includes this friendly discussion.

B. Buy Green Club of Year Award

Gave the 2012 Buy Green Club of Year Award at the [Blue and Green Awards](#) to Madeleine Licavoli and the Board of Supervisors (BOS). As the BOS Buy Green Leader, she added a reminder to their purchasing and performance evaluation forms to remind staff to find green products from SFApproved.org, and got co-workers to post SFApproved.org sticky note reminders by their computers.

C. New Green Citywide Contracts and Products

In 2011, SFE worked on contracts for bags for compost and trash bins, multi-function devices (all-in-one copier, fax, scanner), pest control services. Contracts that went out to bid in 2011 include fuel efficient sedans/enforcement vehicles. Since 2009, SFE and OCA worked on lighting bulbs, ballasts (which went to out to bid in 2012).

New, non-contracted products added to SFApproved.org include keyboard brushes which can replace computer can dusters (which have greenhouse gasses that cause climate change).

D. Outreach

- Increased departments that accepted a Buy Green Consultation from 6 (2007-11) to 38 (2011). Trained over 500 City staff through 12 consultations.
- Got 38 depts. to select Buy Green Leaders and fill out the Buy Green Scorecard, thanks to assistance from the Climate Team. The Scorecard is a new online tool that immediately shows departments their score, giving staff a chance to do things to improve their score before they submit it.

III. Ideas to Help the City Buy Green and Save Money

Some departments said that buying safer, green products can reduce worker compensation complaints. Unfortunately, the City spent \$643,060 on limited use or prohibited products in 2011. To prevent that, here are the most popular ideas from meetings with 700 staff from 25 departments in 2010-12:

A. In performance appraisals, write the percent of green products staff bought

If staff that bought green formally received positive feedback from their supervisor, it could encourage staff to buy a higher percent of green products.

B. It would help if Citywide contracts required online stores with no prohibited products

SFE and OCA customized the Office Depot online store so City staff could not see or buy certain prohibited products. City staff said if other city contracted vendors did that, they could avoid prohibited products.

C. Revamp City purchasing software to steer staff to buy green

Since it is hard for staff to recall or find green products they are required to buy, they said it may be more efficient to be like other governments and companies and get a City purchasing software that steers staff to buy green.

TABLE A. Summary of purchases

2010

2011
 (Data not available from some City contracted vendors: foodware, paper towels, bath tissue, seat covers, office paper, toners)

		% Green	\$ Green products	\$ Limited use or prohibited products	% Green	\$ Green products	\$ Limited use or prohibited products	Notes
COMPUTERS, SERVERS		81%	\$ 3,900,519	\$ 926,381	88%	\$ 2,748,295	\$ 369,862	Some departments need specialty monitors that are not EPEAT gold. In 2011, data was not available from Computerland.
JANITORIAL CLEANERS	Bathroom, Tub, Tile	100%	\$ 108					In 2011, some City staff purchases could not be tracked because several contracts for vendors ended.
	Degreasers	86%	\$ 12,879	\$ 2,079	94%	\$ 72,452	\$ 4,976	
	General Purpose Cleaners	11%	\$ 22					
	Glass cleaners	0%		\$ 1,004	0%		\$ 7,654	
	TOTAL	80%	\$ 13,008	\$ 3,083	85%	\$ 72,452	\$ 12,630	
LIGHTING	Bulbs/Tubes	32%	\$ 165,589	\$ 357,482	26%	\$ 66,558	\$ 189,762	
	Ballasts	79%	\$ 40,187	\$ 10,837	48%	\$ 40,129	\$ 42,860	
	Fixtures				70%	\$ 24,594	\$ 10,534	
	TOTAL	18%	\$ 205,776	\$ 368,319	35%	\$ 131,282	\$ 243,157	
OFFICE SUPPLIES	Batteries (rechargeables AAA -D, 1.5-9 volt)	42%	\$ 10,421	\$ 24,732	40%	\$ 11,714	\$ 17,410	
TOTAL		76%	\$ 4,129,724	\$ 1,322,515	82%	\$ 2,963,742	\$ 643,060	