



SF Environment

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A Department of the City and County of San Francisco

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Mayor

Tyrone Jue
Acting Director

To: Board of Supervisors
From: Tyrone Jue, Acting Director of the Department of Environment
Date: September 8, 2022
Subject: Annual Municipal Buy Green Report

I. Introduction

Chapter 2 of the San Francisco Environment Code (i.e., the Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Ordinance) requires the City of San Francisco to ensure that purchases of commodities and expenditures of public money are made in a manner consistent with its human health and environmental policies. Buying green products supports the health of the environment, municipal staff, and the public; contributes towards sustainability efforts; and can save on costs in the long run.

Under the ordinance, San Francisco's Department of the Environment (SFE) is required to annually review and report on City departments' progress toward full compliance with the ordinance. To this end, SFE analyzes City departments' purchase data, **available at our interactive, [online dashboard](#)**.¹ Below are highlights of SFE's efforts to support City departments in green purchasing; how SFE celebrates City employees who have shown exceptional leadership and dedication to advancing the City's green purchasing efforts; and a glimpse into the City's green purchasing goals for the year ahead.

II. Results of Annual Municipal Department Purchase Data Survey

In 2021, the Buy Green Team collected sales reports on municipal purchases of resilient flooring and carpet. This is the first time the Team is analyzing these product categories. Due to the intense time and resource requirements of this research, the Buy Green Team rotates its analyses each year between different product categories. Past categories have included IT, janitorial cleaners and papers, lighting, and office supplies. Our [online dashboard](#) houses this data and offers a glimpse into the San Francisco departments' compliance with green purchasing requirements.

Data collection process and limitations

The Buy Green team obtained municipal purchase data by requesting sales reports from suppliers for citywide term contracts. There are some challenges and limitations to this method. Although reporting is usually required by contract, the process to obtain the requested information from suppliers can be lengthy. Then once received, the information must be reviewed for errors and updated with corrected information. In addition, the sales data obtained through this process do not include purchases done under Prop Q, which allows Departments to buy certain supplies and equipment under \$10,000 without a contract. While incomplete, we believe the data

¹SFE's Buy Green dashboard available at: <https://bit.ly/BuyGreenDashboard>.

obtained provides a valuable snapshot into Departments' compliance with San Francisco's green purchasing requirements.

Resilient flooring

Compliant resilient flooring products included biobased, rubber, wood and textile planks, sheets, and tiles that met specifications in regulation since December 2020. Suppliers reported that four City Departments purchased resilient flooring products in 2021: the Fire Department, Public Health, Public Utilities Commission, and Public Works.

Overall, about 36% of resilient flooring products purchased complied with the City's green purchasing requirements (\$24,564.92 out of \$68,235.88 of product purchased). All four departments purchased non-compliant resilient flooring, and only two purchased compliant resilient flooring.

While low, this rate is encouraging. The green purchasing specifications for resilient flooring products were adopted in December 2020, and the market for compliant products is still relatively small and expensive, particularly for rubber flooring. In addition, there are no exceptions or exemptions currently for luxury vinyl tile (LVT) patches, which are non-compliant but sometimes deemed a better alternative to replacing and landfilling entire sections of LVT. We expect the market for resilient flooring to continue to expand in response to demand from consumers like the City of San Francisco, as the market did for carpet in response to regulations the City rolled out in 2018.

Carpet and carpet adhesives

Suppliers reported that two City departments purchased carpet in 2021: Public Utilities Commission and Public Works. The carpet and carpet adhesive products they purchased last year were overwhelmingly compliant (\$138,034.89 out of \$139,258.13, or about 99%). This included \$5,080 of compliant carpet adhesives. One reason for this apparent ease of compliance is the carpet industry's response to our and other large purchasers' demand for products that meet our green purchasing requirements. For example, in 2021 we were pleased to add Interface to our list of brands offering compliant products.

III. New Projects

The Buy Green Dashboard (formerly known as the Directors' Buy Green Dashboard)

An independent review of the Green Purchasing Program conducted in 2018 recommended the creation of an annual progress report or dashboard for San Francisco municipal department directors. With input from the City Sustainable Purchasing Committee, SFE created a dashboard using Microsoft Power BI software. In April 2021, we rolled it out as a pilot to the City's nine largest departments: Airport, General Services Agency, Department of Human Services, Library, Police Department, Department of Public Health, Public Works, the Public Utilities Commission, and Department of Technology. Since then, with input from City departments and increased user experience testing, we have been working with the Controllers Office's Performance Team to standardize the dashboard and make it sustainable into the future.

National initiative with Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council (SPLC) to standardize office supplies contracts

In 2021, the Green Purchasing Team worked with the SPLC, a national organization with over 150 members representing \$300 billion of purchasing power, to develop green purchasing specifications that member organizations could adopt in their office supply contracts. There are two levels of specifications: baseline (lower)

and leadership (higher). These specifications can help advance green purchasing of office supplies because they will harmonize contract requirements from suppliers, making it easier for them to comply; give member organizations greater leverage in purchasing more sustainable products; and help purchasers like the City of San Francisco transform the green marketplace. These specifications were recently finalized and can be integrated into future office supply contracts.

IV. Ongoing Projects

Convening the City Sustainable Purchasing Committee (CSPC)

The Green Purchasing Program continued convening this interdepartmental working group that focuses on municipal sustainable purchasing priorities, initiatives, process improvements, and communications. SFE hosted three meetings in 2021.

In the Spring, SFE featured a guest speaker from Minnesota's Sustainable Procurement Program who spoke about strategizing for impact at the state level. The meeting also presented updates on the Directors' Buy Green Performance Dashboard, new green purchasing requirements for City staff, and the Citywide disinfectants and cleaning campaign.

At our second CSPC meeting, SFE presented the Directors' Buy Green Performance Dashboard for the group, shared the findings of a report on PFAS chemicals in building materials, and presented SFE's new Buy Green training for municipal staff.

At our Fall CSPC meeting, Holly Elwood, a Senior Advisor to the US EPA's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Program, presented about the program's successes, strategies, and challenges. In addition, CSPC members held a very successful knowledge swap where they shared their departments' initiatives in green purchasing.

Convening Green Team meetings

SFE convened meetings of municipal staff "Green Teams" last year to discuss resilient flooring and custodial products. Green Teams include City staff who professionally use these specific product categories. The Resilient Flooring Green Team discussed whether to create an exception or a waiver for patches of luxury vinyl tile used for repair work that do not comply with green purchasing regulations passed in 2020. In addition, City staff were introduced to the two flooring suppliers who won a Citywide resilient flooring contract bid last year. The Custodial Green Team also convened last fall to discuss supply chain issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic and offer advice and support.

Buy Green 101 online training

In 2020, the Green Purchasing team rolled out a training video for municipal departments about how to comply with and promote our City's green purchasing goals and requirements. So far, at least 79 City staff from 25 departments and agencies have completed this training, and another 256 staff are enrolled or in-progress.² We expect this training will increase understanding of and compliance with our City's green purchasing mandates.

²The number of City staff who have completed this training may be higher due to an apparent issue with the online training completion toggle.

V. Buy Green Award

This year's Buy Green Leader is the Facilities Department at the San Francisco Airport, represented by the Director of Facilities, Leroy Sisneros. Since 2018, Leroy's team has led and promoted green purchasing within the Facilities Department and beyond. In 2020, Leroy and his team set up a pilot program to test high-performance rechargeable batteries throughout the airport, starting with hands-free hand driers. They have since expanded this pilot beyond Facilities to everything else battery-powered, with an ambitious goal of ultimately requiring rechargeable batteries wherever feasible across the entire Airport.

Leroy's team has also prioritized sourcing healthier industrial supplies, office supplies, and janitorial cleaning products for the Airport. Recently, they worked with SFE to conduct a survey of floor finishes and obtain samples of finishes claiming to be PFAS-free from various departments at the Airport to uncover the source of PFAS chemicals in Airport wastewater. Samples of these floor finishes are currently under analysis. Leroy's team has demonstrated a dedication to purchasing healthier, safer and more sustainable products for their employees and customers that is both exemplary and far-reaching. On behalf of the City and County of San Francisco, we present this award to Leroy and his team as an appreciation for the incredible work that they do.

VI. Next Steps

SFE's Buy Green Program is in a transition phase as it is now overseen and implemented by new staff hired within the last year. In addition to learning about and maintaining its routine activities, the Buy Green program plans to:

1. Fully staff the program by hiring an Assistant Coordinator.
2. Continue to build collaborations with the Responsible Purchasing Network and the Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council.
3. Resume City Sustainable Purchasing Committee meetings.
4. Update SFE's report on safer disinfecting products.
5. Collaborate with Office of Contracts Administration on advancing compliance.
6. Consider updates to the Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Ordinance.