



SF Environment
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2012 Annual Report: Buy Green Ordinance Program for City Staff

Presented to the San Francisco Commission on the Environment

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Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary _____ 2

II. Introduction _____ 2

 A. History and Mandate 2

 B. How Green Product Specifications Are Developed 2

 C. Summary of Past Annual Reports 2

 D. Staff That Worked on Green Citywide Contracts in 2012 2

 E. Why List City Staff That Bought Green or Prohibited Products 3

III. Accomplishments _____ 3

 A. New Green Citywide Contracts and Products 3

 B. Outreach 3

IV. Ideas to Help the City Buy Green and Save Money _____ 3

 A. In Performance Appraisals, Include the Percentage of Green Products Staff Bought 3

 B. Emphasize Online Stores for Citywide Contracts 3

 C. Revamp City Purchasing Software to Steer Staff to Buy Green 3

V. Table A. Summary of green purchases _____ 4

V. Appendix A. City Staff That Bought Green or Prohibited Products _____ 5

I. Executive Summary

Green products are less-toxic, more energy-efficient and made with higher levels of recycled or recyclable materials. SFE and Office of Contract Administration (OCA) lead the implementation of the San Francisco ordinance requiring City staff to buy green products. An important tool in this effort is the [SFApproved.org](#) website, which is the City's list of green products. In 2012, 81% of \$6.66 million dollars of the following purchases by the City were green in the categories of computers, cleaners and bathroom papers, lighting, and office supplies (according to sales reports from Citywide contracted vendors). SFE also redesigned SFApproved.org to make it easier to find green product prices and vendors.

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](#). In the context of City purchasing, 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, Ch. 2). This ordinance was groundbreaking in requiring City funds to be used for approved alternative ("green") products. [SFApproved.org](#) was created in 2010 to support implementation of this ordinance. This annual report to the Commission is required by the ordinance.

B. How Green Product Specifications Are Developed

SFE works with City departments and OCA to develop green specifications for City commodity and service contracts. These specifications may require the purchase of products or services certified under various standards or ecolabels (e.g., Energy Star or Green Seal), or may consist of detailed, independently developed technical specifications. After contracts are awarded, green products and specifications are listed on SFApproved.org. Goals for green products 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 human health and the environment.
3. **Cost:** Is it cost-effective in its manufacturing, use and disposal (life cycle) compared to its alternatives? OCA is responsible for obtaining the best possible prices on City purchases.

SF Approved products fall into four categories:

1. **Required green products:** City staff are required to buy only these products. These products meet all goals above and can save money because they are in City contracts.
2. **Suggested green products:** City departments are encouraged to try these products and rate them at SFApproved.org so they might be included in future contracts. These products meet San Francisco's environmental and health criteria. Some products may need more research on cost or performance.
3. **Limited Use products:** City staff can buy these only when Required or Suggested products do not meet performance requirements.
4. **Prohibited products:** SFE lists some specifically prohibited products for educational purposes.

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 2012

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

E. Why List City Staff That Bought Green or Prohibited Products

SFE lists the purchases made by City staff (page 5) in order to:

- Reward staff that bought green.
- Learn about green product performance concerns, as evidenced by purchases of Limited Use or Prohibited products. Based on these data and other information, SFE staff organize discussions on green purchasing with selected departments

II. Accomplishments

A. New Green Citywide Contracts and Products

In 2012, SFE and OCA worked on contracts for:

- All-in-one copiers, faxes, scanners (multi-function devices)
- Compostable and Plastic Refuse Can Liners
- Fuel
- Garment rentals
- Integrated Pest Management Services
- Lighting fixtures (electrical materials)
- Janitorial cleaners and papers
- Office supplies
- Scrap metal

SFE also worked on a:

- Report of safer disinfectants
- Don't Take the Bait Campaign for less-toxic rodent baits

New products added to SFApproved.org include: compostable bags and recycled plastic trash bags.

B. Outreach

SFE gave presentations to 1,084 people during 2012 on how to buy green products. About 90% of 150 staff from 38 departments said they would recommend the Buy Green Consultation to other City staff.

SFE staff also began redesigning the SFApproved.org website to accommodate security concerns, and to make it easier to find green product prices and vendors.

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 \$1.32 million on less safe, Limited Use and Prohibited products in 2012. To prevent that, here are the most popular ideas from meetings with 700 staff from 25 departments in 2010-12:

A. In Performance Appraisals, Include the Percentage 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. Emphasize Online Stores for Citywide Contracts

SFE and OCA customized the office supplies online store so City staff do not see or buy 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 get all staff to visit SFApproved.org for green products they are required to buy, they said it may be more efficient to be like other governments and companies and get purchasing software that steers staff to buy green.

TABLE A. Summary of what City staff bought (from city contracted vendor sales reports)

		2011				2012					
		% Green	\$ Green products	\$ Limited use & prohibited products	\$ All products	Notes	% Green	\$ Green products	\$ Limited use & prohibited products	\$ All products	Notes
Computers, Servers		88%	\$ 2,748,295	\$ 369,862	\$ 3,118,157	Some departments need specialty monitors that are not EPEAT gold. Data was not available from Computerland.	82%	\$ 3,509,538	\$ 783,557	\$ 4,293,094	Thanks to data from Enpointe & Computerland. Data was not available from Xtech.
Janitorial Cleaners	Hand Soaps & Sanitizers					Some City staff purchases could not be tracked because several contracts for vendors ended.	98%	\$ 80,669	\$ 1,961	\$ 82,630	Thanks to data from Champion, Santora, Waxie.
	Degreasers	94%	\$ 72,452	\$ 4,976	\$ 77,428		22%	\$ 356	\$ 1,242	\$ 1,598	
	General Purpose Cleaners						74%	\$ 20,653	\$ 7,205	\$ 27,858	
	Glass cleaners	0%	\$ -	\$ 7,654	\$ 7,654		38%	\$ 1,001	\$ 1,635	\$ 2,636	
	Other Cleaners						27%	\$ 20,224	\$ 53,669	\$ 73,893	
	TOTAL	85%	\$ 72,452	\$ 12,630	\$ 85,082		90%	\$ 102,679	\$ 12,043	\$ 114,723	
Janitorial Papers	Paper Towels					47%	\$ 227,218	\$ 254,047	\$ 481,264		
	Toilet Seat Covers					65%	\$ 17,822	\$ 9,737	\$ 27,558		
	Toilet Tissue					90%	\$ 640,567	\$ 74,760	\$ 715,326		
	TOTAL					72%	\$ 885,606	\$ 338,543	\$ 1,224,149		
Lighting	Bulbs/Tubes	26%	\$ 66,558	\$ 189,762	\$ 256,321	43%	\$ 86,268	\$ 111,879	\$ 131,980	Thanks to data from Maltby, Regency & Omega (which only gave data for July-Dec.)	
	Ballasts	48%	\$ 40,129	\$ 42,860	\$ 82,989	73%	\$ 53,731	\$ 20,101	\$ 73,831.74		
	Fixtures	70%	\$ 24,594	\$ 10,534	\$ 35,129						
	TOTAL	35%	\$ 131,282	\$ 243,157	\$ 374,439	68%	\$ 139,999	\$ 131,980	\$ 205,811		
Paper (White 100% Post Consumer Waste)							100%	\$ 748,898	\$ -	\$ 748,898	
Office Supplies	Batteries (rechargeables AAA -D, 1.5-9 volt)	40%	\$ 11,714	\$ 17,410	\$ 29,124	38%	\$ 7,292	\$ 12,127	\$ 19,419	Thanks to data from Staples.	
	Bottled Water					0%	\$ -	\$ 1,724	\$ 1,724		
	Cleaners					16%	\$ 8,038	\$ 41,882	\$ 49,920		
	Styrofoam foodware					0%	\$ -	\$ 54	\$ 54		
	TOTAL					22%	\$ 15,330	\$ 55,787	\$ 71,118		
TOTAL		82%	\$ 2,963,742	\$ 643,060	\$ 3,606,802		81%	\$ 5,402,050	\$ 1,321,910	\$ 6,657,793	