

NARRATIVE STATEMENT/WORKPLAN

Product Stewardship, Recycling Market Development and Solid Waste Grants for FY 2003

Regional Electronics Take It Back Network

APPLICANT

This application is being submitted on behalf of the Northwest Product Stewardship Council and is a partnership of the following council member jurisdictions: King County, Snohomish County, City of Seattle, City of Tacoma, Kitsap County, Clark County, Washington and Metro Portland, Oregon. A steering committee made up of one representative from each participating jurisdiction will direct the project.

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PROGRAM PARTNERS

King County

King County Solid Waste Division provides comprehensive solid waste management services to residents and businesses in the unincorporated and incorporated areas of the County outside the city of Seattle. The mission is "to protect human health and the environment by providing quality services that responsibly manage King County's solid waste." The County operates a regional landfill, eight transfer stations and two rural drop boxes. It also provides regional waste prevention and recycling programs including the "Computer Recovery Project" a partnership with private sector electronics recycling and reuse organizations to properly manage electronic waste.

METRO

Metro is a regional government with a directly elected Council and Council President that serves 1.3 million people living in Oregon's Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington Counties and the 24 cities in the Portland metropolitan area. Metro provides transportation and land-use planning services and oversees regional garbage disposal and recycling. Additional functions include managing regional parks and greenspaces and the Oregon Zoo. Metro's Solid Waste and Recycling Department responsibilities include: coordinating waste reduction programs in the region; regulating solid waste facilities; contracting the operation of two regional transfer stations; maintaining two permanent household

hazardous waste facilities; and closing the region's former solid waste landfill. Metro provides a range of waste reduction services including household hazardous waste collection events, compost bin sales, school education programs and a recycling hot line. Metro is working on developing a regional "Take It Back" network for electronic products and a grant program to enhance the region's electronics collection and processing infrastructure. Last year Metro's recycling hot line referred almost 5,000 callers to firms that reuse or recycle electronics.

Snohomish County

Snohomish County Solid Waste Management Division serves unincorporated Snohomish County and 19 cities with a combined population exceeding 600,000. It operates three recycling/garbage transfer stations, five rural drop boxes and one moderate risk waste facility. It provides illegal dumping clean-up and promotion of private sector recycling and composting services. The Division prides itself on its public/private partnership approach and has used this approach in developing its Electronics Take It Back Network of private businesses and community groups providing electronic recycling services. Snohomish Health District does not allow the disposal of computers, monitors, televisions and separated circuit boards from any generator type in the disposal system. Snohomish County holds one of fifteen government negotiator positions in the National Electronic Product Stewardship Initiative and has been asked to provide materials and review comments to EPA's "Plug-In to Recycling" Program, which is under development.

City of Tacoma

Tacoma Solid Waste Management provides services to 52,000 single family customers and 4,400 multi-family and commercial customers in the city. Each day Tacoma trucks and staff collect 640 tons of garbage and recyclables from City residents and businesses. The City also operates its own 240 acre landfill of which 25 acres are currently active. The City offers variable rates to its customers and provides recycling and yard waste services to its residential garbage customers at no additional charge. The City also operates a large recycling drop off and household hazardous waste facility at the landfill that is open to both City and County residents. The City conducted an electronics collection event in conjunction with Pierce County in May of 2002. Over the two days of collection, 1800 vehicles dropped off over 74 tons of electronics equipment.

Kitsap County

Kitsap County's Solid Waste Division (SWD) was established to be in compliance with the Chapter 70.95.020 RCW and Chapter 70.105.007 RCW which describes protection of the public health and environment. The SWD operates the Hansville Drop Box Facility, Poulsbo Recycling Center and the Moderate Risk Waste Collection Facility, provides environmental monitoring and maintenance of closed County-owned landfills, and coordinates services offered at the Olalla and Silverdale Drop Box Facilities and the Olympic View Transfer Station. The SWD develops and implements the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan and the Moderate Risk Waste Management Plan in the unincorporated and incorporated areas of the county.

Clark County

Clark County Solid Waste Program provides a variety of solid waste management services to citizens in the unincorporated and incorporated areas of the county. The county contracts for transfer and disposal services; for residential recycling collection, processing, and marketing; and for household hazardous waste collection, recycling, and disposal services. The county provides coordinated information and education on waste prevention, reduction and recycling. In partnership with the City of Vancouver, Clark College, Jail Industries, Salvation Army, and Waste Connections Inc., it coordinates the new CReaM (Computer Reuse and Marketing) electronics reuse/recovery program.

City of Seattle

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) delivers garbage, recycling and yard waste collection services to Seattle's 500,000 residents, who recycled 48% of their total solid waste in 2001. SPU also provides garbage collection for Seattle businesses, as well as recycling and conservation technical assistance through the Business and Industry Resource Center (BIRV). In 2001 Seattle's businesses recycled 37% of their solid waste. Seattle owns and operates two recycling and disposal stations for garbage transfer and self-haul customers. Seattle's garbage is rail hauled to a privately owned landfill in eastern Oregon. SPU is responsible for the preparation of Seattle's Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plans. The 1998 Plan "On the Path to Sustainability" adopted Zero Waste as a guiding principle, and included increased producer responsibility as a key goal. Seattle is a partner in the regional Computer Recovery Network and participates actively on the Northwest Product Stewardship Council steering committee.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The intent of the program is to provide a network of convenient, ongoing, drop-off facilities where the public can take its used electronic equipment for recycling at no cost. The program partners will work with TV and electronics retailers, manufacturers and recyclers that have joined EPA's "Plug-In to Recycling" (PIR) campaign to provide ongoing collection sites for used electronic equipment.

It is difficult for local governments to establish a program that involves retail stores that are part of a national chain. By coordinating with EPA's work at the national level through the Plug-In to Recycling Program, the local governments can establish relationships with the national chains that are necessary for the successful implementation of this program.

The retail collection sites selected for the program will be located in major cities along the I-5 corridor of Washington and Oregon. The PIR retailers and manufacturers will be asked to provide funds or services that will offset the costs associated with the collection, transportation and recycling of the used equipment.

The local government partners will provide staff time to coordinate the program at the local retail collection sites. The partners will use their knowledge of the local recycling infrastructure to assist in finding recycling services to handle the used electronics. They will provide publicity for the program through their agency web sites, press releases, and

over the phone. They will also develop and distribute Take It Back Network brochures to electronics retailers who will hand them out to customers that buy new equipment.

The program will focus primarily on TVs, computers and electronic office equipment. However, retailers and manufacturers will be encouraged to add other electronic products if such additions fit within their business model. Retailers may wish to test different marketing strategies such as a "one-for-one exchange" where a used TV could be brought in for free recycling if a new TV is purchased. They may also wish to test the distribution of "coupons" that can be redeemed for a discount on merchandise when products are brought in for recycling.

The program will also test the feasibility of handling the used products in a retail setting. It will test the different logistics for collection, storage, packaging for transport, pickups by recyclers on a geographic basis (milk runs) and reverse logistics. The program is expected to take six months to set up and will run for at least a year.

PROGRAM GOALS

- The program will provide the public with convenient, ongoing locations for dropping off its used electronic equipment at no cost using private sector services.
- The program will provide recycling services for some or all of the following electronic equipment: televisions, computer monitors, central processing units, laptop computers, cellular phones, and computer peripherals.
- The large electronics retail stores will provide ongoing take back of electronic products from the public at retail sites for at least six months. Manufacturers will provide resources to offset the costs of collection, transportation and recycling.
- The program will test the feasibility of collecting used electronics products in a retail setting. Different logistics will be tested including: collection at retail stores; storage of materials at the retail store and/or the distribution center; methods for packaging the materials for transport; methods for transporting the materials to the recycling facility including pickups by recyclers on a geographic basis (milk runs) and reverse logistics whereby the materials would be shipped to the recycler in a delivery truck that would otherwise be heading back to the distribution center empty.
- The program may test different promotional tools such as one-for-one take back and coupon offerings in a retail setting if retail partners are interested in pursuing these types of activities.
- The program will serve as a model for the national electronics recycling infrastructure that is being developed via the National Electronics Product Stewardship Initiative (NEPSI) dialogues. The results and experience gained from this program can be used to help develop the national electronic recycling infrastructure.

- The program will demonstrate how to expand the Plug-In to Recycling program to include on-going retailer take back of electronic products and will model how to roll out the program on a regional basis.

PROGRAM TRACKING AND RESULTS

The following data will be collected and analyzed:

- the number of communities participating in the program and the amount of staff time and resources contributed to the program;
- the number and type of stores participating as drop-off locations;
- the volume and weight of equipment recycled;
- the estimated startup costs and the ongoing program costs;
- the type of manufacturer and/or retailer support and dollar value;
- the resulting expansion of collection and processing infrastructure;
- an analysis of the feasibility of using the major electronics retail outlets as collection points for the used equipment;
- the customer satisfaction with the service;
- a summary of the lessons learned.

TASKS

Task 1: Program Planning

The steering committee of local government partners will work with the EPA's Plug-In to Recycling (PIR) manager to identify the major retailers, manufacturers and recyclers interested in participating in the Pacific Northwest regional electronics recycling network. A series of planning meetings will be conducted to develop the initial framework of the program. A consultant will be hired to serve as the liaison between the EPA, businesses and the local government partners, especially at times when travel is necessary and local government partners are not able to travel.

Task 1.1 Hire a Consultant

The local government partners would hire a consultant(s) to assist with the program planning, coordination and implementation. Ideally, the consultant would have background and experience with product stewardship programs and would be familiar with NEPSI, WEPSI and the electronics recycling infrastructure in Oregon and Washington. Other desirable skills include knowledge of the retail industry, logistics, logistics management, freight, transportation, supply chain management, warehousing, distribution, maintenance, manufacturing, management, reliability, mathematics, business, and similar processes.

The consultant would take direction from the local government partners. The consultant would participate in the development and implementation of the program and would assist with strategy meetings, manufacturer and retailer meetings, data collection and program logistics. When long distance, face-to-face meetings are required with EPA, manufacturers and retailers, the consultant may be asked to participate in these meetings.

When local government representatives are unable to travel, the consultant would represent the local government partners.

The consultant would also participate in the scheduling, coordination and facilitation of meetings. The consultant will meet regularly with the local government partners, and provide them with regular progress reports and updates on critical issues.

Timeline Month 1

Task 1.2 Conduct Strategy Meeting

An initial strategy meeting would be held between the EPA PIR Administrator, the local government partners and consultant(s) to establish roles and discuss the strategy for involving the PIR business partners. If possible, the EPA PIR Administrator would travel to the Seattle/Portland area to meet with the local government partners in person. The meeting would be held in a public building to reduce costs. Other meeting options include holding a teleconference or videoconference when people are not able to travel.

The purpose of the meeting is to identify electronics retailers and manufacturers that would be invited to participate in the regional "Electronics Take It Back" program. Ideal retail partners would have multiple stores in Oregon and Washington and have high-level management support of a retail Take It Back program. Ideal manufacturer partners should be willing to cover the costs of transporting the materials from the retail stores to the recycling facility and the costs to recycle the materials at a domestic processing facility.

The group would discuss the mechanism for securing a firm commitment (a letter of agreement, partnership agreement, memorandum of understanding, etc) with the PIR businesses. The consultant would coordinate the development of the agreement, develop a consensus about the content of the agreement and draft the final agreement for signature.

Timeline Month 1

Task 1.3 Establish Partnerships with National PIR Retailers and Manufacturers

Over the course of the next two months, local government representatives, the consultant(s), and EPA's PIR representative (if possible) will meet with the PIR retailers and manufacturers. Ideally, the meetings would be held with business representatives that have decision-making authority about their involvement in the program. This would involve up to eight trips to retailers' and manufacturers' headquarters and possibly to EPA headquarters.

Manufacturer Partners

The local government partners and EPA's PIR representative would arrange to meet individually and manufacturer contacts to discuss details about their role in the regional Electronics Take It Back program. The following elements would be discussed:

- the amount of funding available for transportation and recycling;
- whether the manufacturer has an established relationship with an electronics recycler and if they want to use those services in this Take It Back program;
- transportation logistics - which retail outlets could be served efficiently;
- collection and storage requirements;
- the payment mechanism for the transportation and processing;
- timeline for program kick off.

National Retailer Partners

The local government partners and EPA's PIR representative would arrange to meet individually and national retailer contacts to discuss details about their role in the regional Take It Back program. The following elements would be discussed:

- the potential retail outlets that would serve as collection sites and their locations;
- potential marketing strategies for the Take It Back program;
- the logistics for collecting and storing the materials at the retail store and/or the distribution center or other facility;
- other potential resources available from the retailers;
- coordination with the manufacturers;
- a timeline for implementation.

The PIR retail and manufacturer partners would be asked to sign an agreement (partnership agreement) stating their level of commitment and the resources that would be contributed toward the regional program.

A report documenting the meeting and outcomes will be drafted and sent for review by local government partners, retailers and manufacturers.

Timeline

Months 2 - 4

1.4 Meetings with Local Retailer Partners

The local government partners would arrange individual meetings with local retailer contacts in Oregon and Washington to discuss the program implementation. The local government representative in each of their respective jurisdictions would arrange and attend the meetings in addition to the consultant and PIR representative, if possible. The consultant(s) would assist with the meeting logistics, facilitation and note taking.

The details of the Electronics Take It Back "operations plan" would be formed, responsibilities assigned and roles confirmed. The plan will identify:

- implementation of marketing strategies for the Take It Back program;

- the recycling services available to collect, transport and process the materials;
- the logistics of collecting the materials at retail stores;
- the logistics of storing the materials at the retail store and/or the distribution center or other facility;
- methods for packaging the materials for transport;
- methods for transporting the materials to the recycling facility, including pickups by recyclers on a geographic basis (milk runs) and reverse logistics whereby the materials would be shipped to the recycler in a delivery truck that would otherwise be heading back to the distribution center empty.
- coordination with manufacturer partners.
- publicity for program kick off.

Timeline

Months 3- 4

Task 1.6 Draft an Operations Plan

The local government partners, working with the PIR businesses and the consultant, will draft a plan that outlines the logistics and funding mechanism for the drop off, transportation and recycling of electronics from participating retail locations in Washington and Oregon. The plan will be distributed to each of the partners for review. The consultant will reconcile contradictory comments and details, if necessary, will incorporate final edits and will send a final copy to partners for final sign off.

Timeline

Month 4 - 6

Task 2: Program Implementation

The retailers, manufacturers and local government partners will phase in the implementation of take-back service as outlined in the Operations Plan. The retailers will collect and store the materials and the recyclers will pick up the materials and transport them to a processing facility. Retailers may also test out marketing strategies such as co-op advertising associated with the Electronics Take It Back program. Manufacturers will offset the costs of the collection, transportation and processing by providing funds to the retailers and/or the recyclers.

The local government partners will publicize the program through their web sites, press releases and other available channels. The local governments, with assistance from the consultant, will plan, develop and print brochures or flyers about the Electronics Take It Back program opportunities. The brochures will be distributed by local governments, local computer retail stores and electronics reuse and recycling organizations. Local governments and/or the consultant would mail and deliver the brochures to distribution sites.

Timeline

Months 7 - 12

Task 3: Tracking and Evaluation

The local governments, consultant(s) and business partners will determine the best way to collect and analyze the data and will develop a system to be used throughout each phase of the program. The following data will be collected and analyzed throughout the program:

- the number of communities participating in the Plug-In to Recycling retailer Electronics Take It Back program;
- the number and type of stores participating as drop-off locations;
- the type of manufacturer and/or retailer support and dollar value;
- the resulting expansion of collection and processing infrastructure;
- the volumes of materials collected; customer satisfaction with the program and the lessons learned by piloting innovative approaches.

A final report will be prepared by the local government partners. The report will be available to NEPSI participants and others interested in establishing ongoing electronics take back programs.

Timeline

Months 3 - 12