



SF Environment

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2013-2014 Annual Report: Buy Green Ordinance Program for City Staff

Presented to the San Francisco Commission on the Environment

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Prepared by the San Francisco Department of the Environment (SFE)

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I. Executive Summary

Environmentally preferable or "green" products are less toxic, more energy efficient and made with higher levels of recycled or recyclable materials. By ordinance, City departments are required to purchase green products in certain product categories. The Department of the Environment (SFE) and Office of Contract Administration (OCA) lead the ordinance implementation. SFE maintains a list of green products at SFApproved.org.

Major activities and trends:

2013:

- Out of a total of \$7.3 million dollars the City spent on computers, cleaning products, janitorial papers, lighting, and office supplies, 64% qualified as "green" products (according to sales reports from citywide contracted vendors).
- SFE redesigned the SFApproved.org website to make it easier for City departments to find green products and vendors. The website is also available for use by the general public.

2014:

- Out of a total of \$4.7 million dollars the City spent on computers, cleaning products, janitorial papers, lighting, and office supplies, 79% qualified as "green" products (according to sales reports from citywide contracted vendors).

Green purchases increased between 2013 and 2014:

- Overall from 64% to 79%.
- For computers, printers and servers from 71% to 82%.
- For green cleaners (bought from the office supplies contract) from 6% to 97%, possibly because of reduced availability of noncompliant products or the expiration of citywide janitorial contracts.

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](#), a policy statement requiring City operations to select alternatives that present the least potential threat to human health and the City's natural systems, based on the best available science. In 2005, San Francisco enacted the [Precautionary Purchasing Ordinance](#) (Environment Code, Ch. 2). This ordinance applies the Precautionary Principle to City purchasing, and requires City departments to purchase only approved alternative ("green") products for certain priority product categories. [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.

The 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 convenes meetings with City staff and established Green Teams to obtain information on product performance, in addition to OCA's surveys of City departments.

2. **Impact:** Does the product have unacceptable worker health, public health, or environmental impacts? SFE takes the lead role in assessing impacts on human health and the environment and developing purchasing specifications accordingly.
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.

Green products and specifications are listed on SFAApproved.org in one of two 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 almost always in City contracts.
2. **Suggested green products:** City staff are encouraged to try these products and rate them at SFAApproved.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.

C. Staff That Worked on Green Citywide Contracts

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

II. Accomplishments

A. New Green Citywide Contracts and Products

SFE and OCA worked on the following contracts:

1. Computers ("IT Store")
2. Fuel
3. Garment rentals
4. Integrated pest management services
5. Lighting fixtures (electrical materials)
6. Janitorial cleaners and papers
7. Office supplies
8. Reprographics printing
9. SFMTA cable car tickets

SFE also:

1. Added the following new products to SFAApproved.org:
 - o Safer [dish soap](#) (Required)
 - o Safer [disinfectants](#) (Suggested)
 - o Hundreds of less-toxic, energy-efficient [lighting](#) products (Required)
2. Created regulations for these "Required" green products:
 - o [Compostable plastic bags](#)
 - o [Computers & Monitors](#)
 - o Cleaners: [bathroom cleaners](#), [carpet extraction cleaners](#), [cleaner degreasers](#), [dish soaps](#), [floor cleaners](#), [finishes](#) and [strippers](#), [furniture polish](#), [general purpose cleaners](#), [glass cleaners](#), [hand soaps](#), [hand sanitizers](#), [toilet cleaners \(acid\)](#), [toilet deodorizers](#)
 - o [Lighting](#)

B. Outreach

To increase green purchases, SFE gave presentations to 269 people at 11 events on how to buy green products. SFE staff redesigned the SFAApproved.org website to make it easier to find green product prices and vendors, as well as to address urgent security concerns.

III. Helping the City Buy Green and Save Money

Although buying safer, green products can reduce worker compensation costs, the City spent at least \$2.6 million in 2013 and \$971,753 in 2014 on products that were not considered green. To identify opportunities to reduce these purchases, SFE conducted meetings with 969 staff from 25 departments in 2010-14. Below are three common recommendations:

A. Incorporate Green Purchasing into Performance Appraisals

If staff received formal credit from their supervisors for their green purchasing activities, they may be more motivated to seek out and purchase green products.

B. Emphasize Online Stores for Citywide Contracts

Online stores that streamline the purchasing process will drive up green purchases. For example, SFE and OCA customized the office supplies online store so City staff cannot see or buy prohibited products. City staff that SFE consulted with indicated that if other city vendors did likewise, green purchases would increase because it is much more difficult to buy prohibited products.

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

While SFApproved.org provides comprehensive information on green products, and clearly denotes which ones are "Required", the website does not allow staff to actually make a purchase. City staff do not always visit SFApproved.org to find the green products because it is an additional and time-consuming step. City staff have repeatedly suggested that San Francisco – like numerous other jurisdictions across the country -- should update its citywide purchasing software to more efficiently steer staff toward green products.

San Francisco is beginning a major upgrade of its purchasing and accounting systems in 2015, SFE plans to work closely with the Controllers Office and OCA to integrate green purchasing functionality into the new software. SFE is also researching ways to incorporate online store requirements into more citywide term contracts. In the coming year, SFE plans to update the City's specifications for computer and other IT equipment, assist vendors in rolling out the green cleaning training program specified in the new janitorial cleaners contract, and work closely with a few key city departments to improve their green purchasing performance.

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

		2013				2014					
		% Green	\$ Green products	\$ Limited use & prohibited products	\$ All products	Notes	% Green	\$ Green products	\$ Limited use & prohibited products	\$ All products	Notes
Computers, Printers, Servers	SUBTOTAL	71%	\$ 2,182,426	\$ 888,652	\$ 3,071,078	Data provided by Enpointe & Computerland. Data was not available from Xtech.	82%	\$ 2,830,342	\$ 634,658	\$ 3,465,000	Data provided by Enpointe & Xtech. Data was not available from Computerland.
Janitorial Cleaners	Bath, Tub & Tile Cleaners	12%	\$ 1,133	\$ 8,142	\$ 9,275	Data provided by Champion, Santora, Waxie.					For 2014, there was not a full year of data available for janitorial cleaners and supplies, making comparisons invalid.
	Carpet Extraction Cleaners	24%	\$ 3,514	\$ 11,439	\$ 14,953						
	Degreasers	2%	\$ 648	\$ 31,494	\$ 32,142						
	Disinfectants	22%	\$ 22,166	\$ 77,283	\$ 99,449						
	Floor Cleaners, Strippers, Finishes	59%	\$ 23,462	\$ 16,269	\$ 39,731						
	Furniture Polishes	5%	\$ 831	\$ 16,269	\$ 17,100						
	General Purpose Cleaners	86%	\$ 33,745	\$ 5,450	\$ 39,195						
	Glass Cleaners	50%	\$ 4,376	\$ 4,344	\$ 8,720						
	Hand Soaps & Sanitizers	100%	\$ 196,039	\$ 606	\$ 196,645						
	SUBTOTAL	63%	\$ 286,538	\$ 171,305	\$ 457,843						
Janitorial Supplies	Can Liners	100%	\$ 83,809		\$ 83,809						
	Paper Towels	41%	\$ 237,843	\$ 349,105	\$ 586,948						
	Toilet Seat Covers	0%		\$ 20,500	\$ 20,500						
	Toilet Tissue	59%	\$ 552,857	\$ 378,632	\$ 931,489						
	SUBTOTAL	54%	\$ 874,509	\$ 748,237	\$ 1,622,746						
Lighting	Bulbs/Tubes	55%	\$ 150,700	\$ 123,164	\$ 273,864	Data provided by Maltby, Regency & Omega. Fixtures were not analyzed because of data quality.	53%	\$ 112,279	\$ 100,946	\$ 213,225	Data provided by Maltby and Omega. Data was not available from Regency.
	Ballasts	76%	\$ 69,810	\$ 21,529	\$ 91,339		44%	\$ 26,694	\$ 34,246	\$ 60,940	
	Fixtures						68%	\$ 34,178	\$ 15,827	\$ 50,005	
	SUBTOTAL	60%	\$ 220,510	\$ 144,693	\$ 365,203		53%	\$ 173,151	\$ 151,019	\$ 324,170	
Office Supplies	Batteries (rechargeables AAA -D, 1.5-9 volt)	22%	\$ 5,069	\$ 17,888	\$ 22,957	Data provided by Staples.	12%	\$ 3,043	\$ 21,691	\$ 24,734	Data provided by Staples. Data on ink cartridges / toners was not received.
	Bottled Water			\$ 36	\$ 36				\$ 801	\$ 801	
	Cleaners	6%	\$ 1,824	\$ 28,868	\$ 30,692		97%	\$ 19,693	\$ 584	\$ 20,277	
	Ink/Toner	33%	\$ 237,317	\$ 482,027	\$ 719,344						
	Paper (8.5"x 11" or 8.5" x 14", White 100% Post Consumer Waste)	88%	\$ 921,587	\$ 125,331	\$ 1,046,918		81%	\$ 708,671	\$ 163,000	\$ 871,671	
	SUBTOTAL	64%	\$ 1,165,797	\$ 654,150	\$ 1,819,947		81%	\$ 731,407	\$ 186,076	\$ 917,483	
TOTAL		64%	\$ 4,729,780	\$ 2,607,037	\$ 7,336,816	79%	\$ 3,734,900	\$ 971,753	\$ 4,706,653		