



**NAPA-VALLEJO WASTE
MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY**

Agenda Date: 9/3/2009

Agenda Placement: 8A

Napa-Vallejo Waste Management Authority **Board Agenda Letter**

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Martha Burdick for Cave, Trent - Manager
Napa-Vallejo Waste Management Authority
REPORT BY: Trent Cave, Manager - 7072534274
SUBJECT: Presentation by Heidi Sanborn

RECOMMENDATION

EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY PRESENTATION

PRESENTATION: Heidi Sandborn, Executive Director of the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC) to make a presentation on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) activities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

see Background section.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Ms. Sanborn will provide a short presentation on the activities of the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC) as it relates to Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), and provide the Board an opportunity to ask questions.

The following excerpt is from information provided to staff by Ms. Sanborn.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that approximately 75 percent of today's waste stream comes from manufactured products – from every day household items such as home televisions, cell phones, personal computers, fluorescent lights and household batteries to household hazardous waste products like paint and pesticides. Electronics contain lead, cadmium, and other toxic heavy metals that pose a threat to public health and the environment when improperly disposed. Other products also contain toxic constituents, such as the mercury contained in fluorescent lights, or are packaged with problematic materials and use excessive packaging. Still other products, such as hypodermic needles and other “Sharps” can injure the public and sanitation workers when improperly disposed.

In response to legitimate environmental concerns about the landfilling of such products, California has enacted landfill bans in recent years. In 2006, “Universal Waste” (fluorescent lights, household batteries, electronics, mercury switches, etc.) were banned from landfilling. In 2008, “Sharps” were banned from landfilling. Because of growing concerns about the presence of prescription and non-prescription drug residues in our waterways, it is anticipated that pharmaceutical waste will likely be banned from landfill disposal in the near future. However well-intended the disposal bans are, the responsibility for enforcing these bans has been placed on cash-strapped local governments, which lack the funding, capacity or resources to properly manage the growing list of products banned from landfills. This is an unfunded mandate and the result is a “ban without a plan.”

Under today's waste management system, the responsibility for managing the end-of-life (EOL) of these product wastes falls on local governments. When local governments initially took responsibility for municipal solid waste in the early 1900's, the waste stream was much simpler – primarily coal ash from residential heating and cooking. We now have a far more complex waste stream and are experiencing the staggering proliferation of product waste. Many products today are actually designed for disposal, rather than reuse or recycling. It is both the toxicity of the waste stream and the staggering volume of waste that is of concern to local governments. Ratepayers and taxpayers are financing costly collection infrastructure and programs which, in effect, amount to a subsidy for the product manufacturers, who take no responsibility for the end-of-life management of the products they design, sell and profit from – with few exceptions.

Extended Producer Responsibility will also create a level playing field for producers. Voluntary take-back programs are not fair and put the “good actors” in a position of having products that are more expensive in a competitive market place. Under an EPR system, all producers of a particular product will be required to be stewards of that product at the end of life, which “levels the playing field” as all producers will integrate the cost of product discard management into the purchase price of the product. Those that create the most cost-competitive recycling program will have the least expensive product. EPR allows the free-market system to work for recycling, not against it.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

None

Manager: Approve
Reviewed By: Martha Burdick