



Resolution Number 06-3  
March 22, 2006  
Charleston, South Carolina

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Alexandria, Virginia

As certified by  
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Executive Director

### **PRINCIPLES OF PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP\***

WHEREAS, product stewardship efforts aim to encourage industry and consumers to take increasing responsibility to reduce the entire life-cycle impacts of a product and its packaging – energy and materials consumption, air and water emissions, the amount of toxics in the product, worker safety, and waste disposal – in product design and in the end-of-life management of products they produce.

WHEREAS, product stewardship is a key strategy to reduce greenhouse gas impacts and address climate change issues.

WHEREAS, “extended producer responsibility,” or product stewardship, has been recognized as one of the policy directions that will help move the United States towards more sustainable materials management, and is reflected in a draft report entitled, “Sustainable Materials Management: The Road Ahead,” developed by a state/U.S. EPA workgroup.

WHEREAS, states have a responsibility to explore the issues, technology, and practices related to product stewardship.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

ECOS recognizes and urges utilization of the following *Principles of Product Stewardship*. The *Principles* have been developed to support state and local agencies in promoting product stewardship and developing public policy and agreements with industry and environmental groups to reduce the health and environmental impacts from consumer products.

These *Principles* will serve as the basis for stakeholder engagement on products and product stewardship programs, including legislation where needed. The most viable agreements or public policy will occur when the interests of all stakeholders are considered. In accordance with these *Principles*, states are encouraged to adopt product stewardship framework policies that promote consistent and efficient processes for designating products and executing programs. A “framework” refers to a policy that establishes product stewardship programs so multiple products that negatively impact our environment can be covered without a new policy or law for each product.

- **Responsibility** – The responsibility for reducing product impacts should be shared among all entities in the product chain, including industry (designers, manufacturers, and retailers of products or product components, haulers, and recyclers), government, and consumers. The greater the ability an entity has to minimize a product’s lifecycle impacts, the greater is its degree of responsibility, and opportunity, for addressing those impacts. Manufacturers, who make design and marketing decisions, have the greatest ability and responsibility to reduce product impacts.
  
- **Internalized Costs** – All product lifecycle costs – from using resources, to reducing health and environmental impacts throughout the product process, to managing products at the end-of-life – should be included in the total product costs. The costs of product manufacture, use, and disposal should be shifted away from the general public and local and state governments, and to the manufacturers and consumers of products. Manufacturers should thus have a direct financial incentive to redesign their products to reduce their costs and the environmental impacts associated with product design, manufacture, use, and disposal.
  
- **Incentives for Cleaner Products and Sustainable Management Practices** – Policies that promote and implement product stewardship principles, especially when combined with fiscal incentives, should create incentives for the manufacturer to design and produce “cleaner” products – ones made using less energy, materials, and toxics, and which result in less waste (through reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting) and use less energy to operate. These policies should also create incentives for the development of a sustainable and environmentally sound systems to collect, reuse, and recycle products at the end of their lives.
  
- **Flexible Management Strategies** – Those that are responsible for reducing the health and environmental impacts of products should have flexibility in determining how to most effectively address those impacts. The performance of responsible parties shall be driven by performance goals and the achievement of those goals.
  
- **Roles and Relationships** – Industry should provide leadership in realizing these *Principles* and established performance goals for its products. Government will provide leadership in promoting the practices of product stewardship through legislation, procurement, technical assistance, program evaluation, education, and agency coordination, as well as by addressing regulatory barriers and, where necessary, providing regulatory incentives and disincentives. Industry and government shall provide – and consumers should take full advantage of – information needed to make responsible environmental purchasing, reuse, recycling, and disposal decisions.

\* Resolution Number 02-08, Approved October 8, 2002, San Antonio, Texas (resolution of same title expired in 2005)