

# Program Philosophy



# 3

## 3. Program Philosophy

This section consists of our Program's guiding principles, vision for the future, and mission and goals, which drive our work. The vision, guiding principles and mission were developed through a strategic planning process in 2001. They were updated in 2006. Our goals and sub-goals have recently been revised to be as specific as possible, and by which we can measure our progress.

### 3.1. Guiding Principles

These guiding principles were intended to be used in the development of our Program's vision, mission and goals; and to help us carry out our mission and accomplish our goals. They are:

1. Be a regional leader in environmental and public health issues relating to hazardous chemical materials.
2. Foster an ethic of responsibility among those who produce, sell and use hazardous products for minimizing risks to human health and the environment from hazardous materials.
3. Ensure that Program services are available to and easily accessed by all county residents and businesses regardless of where they reside.
4. Develop and implement strategies that optimize Program service delivery to the county's most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.
5. Use emerging information technologies to the Program's advantage while at the same time communicating in alternative ways to ensure that no group or community is excluded from Program information or services.
6. Promote the Program's use of emerging technologies to further increase its effectiveness.
7. Establish Program priorities, target resources and focus efforts accordingly.
8. Be adaptive to changing conditions – such as:
  - Community values
  - Environmental and health indicators
  - Political priorities
9. Be responsive and accountable to ratepayers.
10. Program resources will only be used for Program activities.
11. Program partners promote, and act in, the Program's best interest.
12. Continually improve Program efficiency and effectiveness by measuring Program performance.
13. Continually improve Program staff's professional, technical and cultural competency.
14. Be strategic in developing partnerships that advance the Program's mission. This includes developing non-traditional partnerships.
15. Work "upstream" to reduce human and environmental exposure to hazardous materials and products and to reduce reliance on publicly funded services. Examples include:
  - Promoting greater producer responsibility.
  - Encouraging businesses to use existing and emerging "green" technologies.

16. In priority order, promote the following hazardous waste management strategies:
  - Waste prevention
  - Waste reduction
  - Reuse
  - Recycling
  - Physical, chemical and biological treatment
  - Incineration
  - Solidification or stabilization
  - Landfill
17. Encourage greater coordination of effort by government and non-governmental organizations, businesses and residents.
18. Facilitate interagency coordination and cooperation to:
  - Improve regulatory oversight and enforcement.
  - Minimize regulatory gaps.
  - Reduce duplication of effort.

## 3.2. Vision

Our Vision is that the Puget Sound region is the cleanest in the country – one free of hazardous chemical exposure. More specifically, residents, businesses and government demand, use and produce products that are the least harmful to the environment and all segments of the county's population. Exposure to toxic or otherwise hazardous chemicals is virtually eliminated, essentially reduced to natural background levels. King County residents have the lowest body burden for harmful chemicals of any population in the U.S., and the most disadvantaged are as free of such exposures as the most well off. People's potential is not in any way limited due to chemical exposures, and health disparities due to chemical exposures among different segments of the population are eliminated. Products that still present any risk from chemical content are managed in a closed-loop stewardship system, funded by those who make and sell the products, until such time as they can be replaced with safer ingredients. Waste of all types is minimized, and the county's waste management systems (solid waste, wastewater, storm water) are not compromised in any way due to hazardous chemical content. The local environment is virtually free of hazardous chemicals (approaching natural background levels) and is the cleanest of any urban area in the country. We set a global example of stewardship and sustainability related to toxic or otherwise hazardous chemicals as we leave a positive legacy for the future.

## 3.3. Mission

Our Mission is to protect and enhance public health and environmental quality in King County by reducing the threat posed by the production, use, storage and disposal of hazardous materials.

## 3.4. Goals

In 2009, our goals were revised and reorganized to align with, and directly flow from, our mission's main focus areas. Those areas include: 1) production; 2) use and storage; and 3) disposal of hazardous materials. In addition to those three mission focus areas, we added a further area of managing and administering the Program. That was done to explicitly articulate what we must do to accomplish the goals in the first three mission focus areas.

Under each mission focus area, the goals are listed that address that area of work. Under those goals are sub-goals that are further delineations of the goals. Those mission focus areas, goals and sub-goals for the Program are as follows:

### **Mission Focus Area 1: Reduce Production of Hazardous Materials**

#### Goal 1: Reduce the production of hazardous materials and products

Sub-goal 1A: Establish Product Stewardship/producer responsibility systems that result in the reformulation of and/or discontinuation of the production of products that have hazardous components.

Sub-goal 1B: Implement Green Chemicals policies at local, state and federal levels that promote the use of safer alternatives to hazardous chemicals.

### **Mission Focus Area 2: Reduce Use and Promote Safe Storage of Hazardous Materials**

#### Goal 2: Reduce the use of, and exposure to, hazardous materials and products

Sub-goal 2A: Reduce demand for and use of the most hazardous products.

Sub-goal 2B: Increase demand for and use of less hazardous alternatives.

Sub-goal 2C: Assist cities, small quantity generators, residents and others in reducing use of and exposure to hazardous materials.

#### Goal 3: Reduce public and environmental exposure to the most hazardous materials.

Sub-goal 3A: Reduce the use of, and exposure to, pesticides.

Sub-goal 3B: Reduce the use of, and exposure to, mercury and mercury-containing products.

Sub-goal 3C: Reduce the use of, and exposure to, lead and lead-containing products.

Sub-goal 3D: Reduce public and environmental exposure to pharmaceutical wastes.

Sub-goal 3E: Reduce the use of, and exposure to, other identified high-risk hazardous materials.

#### Goal 4: Reduce the exposure of vulnerable and traditionally underserved populations to toxic and other hazardous materials.

Sub-goal 4A: Reduce the exposure of young children and youth to hazardous materials and products.

Sub-goal 4B: Reduce the exposure of traditionally underserved populations to hazardous materials and products.

### **Mission Focus Area 3: Promote Proper Disposal of Hazardous Materials**

#### Goal 5: Facilitate proper hazardous waste disposal.

Sub-goal 5A: Implement product stewardship/producer responsibility in managing hazardous materials.

Sub-goal 5B: Assist cities, small quantity generators, residents and others in properly disposing of hazardous wastes.

Sub-goal 5C: Promote Waste-Management Practices that are consistent with Washington State's Waste Management Hierarchy (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Treat, Incinerate, and Landfill, in that order).

Sub-goal 5D: Provide equitable Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection and disposal services.

Sub-goal 5E: Facilitate equitable collection and disposal services for businesses that produce small quantities of hazardous waste (small quantity generators or SQGs).

Sub-goal 5F: Increase coordinated regional compliance and enforcement efforts.

### **Mission Focus Area 4: Manage and Administer the Program**

#### Goal 6: Manage the program to be efficient, effective, and equitable for the Program's ratepayers.

Sub-goal 6A: Plan the Program's work and financing so that our services are current and relevant to the community's needs.

Sub-goal 6B: Increase equity with respect to the Program's services.

Sub-goal 6C: Effectively manage and coordinate implementation of the Program.

Sub-goal 6D: Steward the Program fund and its HHW and SQG sub-funds.

Sub-goal 6E: Evaluate results and adjust efforts based on that evaluation.

Sub-goal 6F: Be accountable to the public by reporting results to our customers, ratepayers, program partners, elected officials and others.

## **3.5. Policy Approaches**

Government programs address issues within their legislated sphere of responsibility through the development of public policies. These public policies can be articulated in a variety of ways. One of those ways is to group public policies into broad approaches, under which several categories of action can be explored. At that first level of articulation, there are five broad approaches that can be taken.

These include employing:

1. Carrots (Positive Incentives),
2. Sticks (Negative Sanctions),
3. Sermons (Information Provision),
4. Structures (Government Mediation of Markets), and
5. Other/Miscellaneous Methods.<sup>1</sup>

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1 This typology was derived from several works, including: Marie-Louise Bemelmans-Videc, Ray C. Rist and Evert Vedung, *Carrots, Sticks & Sermons: Policy Instruments & Their Evaluation* (London: Transaction Publishers, 1998); David L. Weimer and Aidan R. Vining, *Policy Analysis, Concepts and Practice, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1998); Neil Gunningham, Peter Grabosky and Darren Sinclair, *Smart Regulation: Designing Environmental Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1998); and G. Bruce Doern and Richard W. Phidd, *Canadian Public Policy: Ideas, Structure, Process, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.* (Ontario: Nelson Canada, 1992).

At the second level, categories of action can be derived from which one can develop specific policy tools. Those tools can be selected to address problems and issues specifically. These categories of action include:

- Making Expenditures,
- Mediating Applicable Markets,
- Creating Laws,
- Government Exhortation,
- Government Enterprise,
- Voluntary/Self-Regulation, and
- Hybrids or Combinations of these categories of action.

### **3.5.1. Positive Incentives**

Providing positive incentives, sometimes referred to as using “carrots,” can be defined as the act of giving something to a target audience to get them to change their behavior. This means getting a target audience to do something that they would otherwise not do, or stop doing something that they would otherwise do, without the incentive. Policy actions that governments can take here include expending public funds and government facilitation of markets.

Expending public funds can be through supply-side or demand-side subsidies, providing cushions to a specified end, and subsidizing insurance. In the expenditure arena, the Program is employing supply-side subsidies in the form of matching grants through our Voucher Incentive Program; and demand-side, in-kind subsidies through the distribution of our Green Home Kits. The Program could explore additional cash or matching grants, or vouchers or in-kind subsidies for specific products or activities, either as rewards, or to stimulate or subsidize their adoption.

### **3.5.2. Negative Sanctions**

Applying negative sanctions, also called using “sticks,” can be defined as the act of taking something away from a target audience to get them to change their behavior. This means getting a target audience to do something that they would otherwise not do, or stop doing something that they would otherwise do, without the sanction. Policy actions under this approach include developing laws to limit the public’s behavior, implying that the government might take action if certain actions continue, or requiring target audiences to expend their resources through imposing taxes or fees.

Our Program is non-regulatory, we do not have the authority to create laws or regulations, make the threat of the creation of new laws or regulations, or take direct enforcement actions. The Program does work to coordinate compliance and enforcement amongst the appropriate agencies that do have enforcement authority. However, we do this in only the most egregious cases. This is done through our Interagency Compliance Team (ICT). That team collectively assesses the problem site and coordinates joint inspections and enforcement. Our Program also maintains a small clean up fund for those sites that must be addressed rapidly, and have no other way to fund immediate clean-up action.

We also advocate for appropriate laws and regulations with those legislative bodies at the federal, state and local levels that can take such actions. Specifically, we have, and will continue to, participate in legislative discussions on pharmaceutical disposal, mercury containing lighting and products, and other products and substances that are hazardous. These legislative discussions could result in restrictions, bans, fines, taxes or fees placed on the use of certain hazardous products or substances.

Our Program could do more work with regard to advocating for additional product labeling or other means of information disclosure. Those compulsory disclosures could be advocated for at the appropriate legislative bodies.

### **3.5.3. Information Provision**

Providing information, also called giving “sermons,” can be defined as the act of informing a target audience to get them to change their behavior. This means getting a target audience to do something that they would otherwise not do, or stop doing something that they would otherwise do, without that information. Policy actions under this approach include exhortation and direct provision of information to target audiences.

Exhortation basically means asking somebody to either do something or stop doing something using persuasion or information. It does not involve rewards or punishments under this approach. Information provided with rewards for using that information, or punishments for not using that information, would fall under the carrot or stick approaches described previously. In this context, the intent is to provide information that is fact based; new, useful and compelling to the target audience; and provides them with less or nonhazardous alternatives. Our Program provides information about hazardous chemicals to a variety of audiences. Some of those audiences include school lab teachers; nail salon, janitorial and landscaping workers and businesses; low income housing maintenance staff; auto repair shops, drycleaners, autobody paint shops, small manufacturers, and a variety of other businesses. We also have developed a rigorous behavior change approach, based on scientific models. That approach is known as Community–Based Social Marketing. However, we also know, from a variety of studies, that information alone does not result in behavior change. More targeted and audience specific marketing approaches are necessary.

We provide information in a variety of ways, incorporating our behavior change models. We use various print media including press releases, fliers in the mail, brochures, publications, wallet pocket cards, reports, etc. We use audio and video media including videos, TV and radio. We maintain an extensive Web site with publically accessible reports and databases. Our Program maintains both household hazardous and business waste phone information lines on a 40 hour a week basis, with recorded information available 24 hours a day. We also respond to voice mails, e-mails and letters requesting information. Staff members present information at conferences and public meetings, make presentations to elected officials and community groups, and to professional and business groups. Our Program is also the originator of the EnviroStars Awards. That program formally recognizes

and certifies businesses that meet certain standards with their use, proper storage and disposal of hazardous products.

Providing accurate and unbiased information is a never-ending effort. We will continue to use the same methods we have used in the past, i.e., audio, video and print media. We have expanded and redesigned our Web site and we are beginning to explore the variety of new social networking technologies including Facebook, Twitter and others. We should also consider more compelling statements on hazards delivered through government bodies that have the recognition and stature to gain public attention, and that have the public's respect. Those might include local, state and federal agencies and legislative bodies, as well as universities, research institutes and other groups with credibility.

Our Program could do more work with regard to encouraging voluntary product labeling or other means of information disclosure. We could also seek more product labeling by working with third parties on product certification.

#### **3.5.4. Structures (Government Mediation Of Markets)**

Government mediation of markets, also referred to as "structuring" or regulating markets, can be defined as the act of changing markets that a target audience would be effected by, to get that target audience to change their behavior. This means getting a target audience to do something that they would otherwise not do, or stop doing something that they would otherwise do, without that modification to the market. Policy actions under this approach include government enterprise and market mediation.

The Program is operating through government enterprise by providing service directly to customers and ratepayers, by working through intermediate agencies like sewer districts, and by contracting out to for profit and non-profit firms. We are not in a position, however, to directly modify markets with regard to hazardous household or commercial business products.

We provide direct service through ICT; collection and disposal services at our three fixed facilities, the Wastemobile and the semi-fixed service at the Auburn SuperMall; through our homebound collections service; technical assistance service to business customers; and through our SQG collection services offered at all our facilities. We are providing indirect service through our Program Partners and the special purpose governments like the sewer districts. And we are providing services through contracting out, to for-profit firms in the case of final hazardous waste disposal, and to non-profit groups, such as the Environmental Coalition of South Seattle (ECOSS), for help in communicating about our services to some of our historically underserved populations.

The Program could and should further explore these approaches, and contemplate expanding them to more fully get at some of the more vulnerable and historically underserved populations that we

have not been serving adequately in the past. We might consider expanding the number of external community groups that we interact with and also consider partnering directly with them in the future.

### **3.5.5. Other/Miscellaneous**

The other/miscellaneous approach can be defined as the location for approaches that do not easily fit under the other approaches described previously. These approaches also aim at changing a target audience's behavior. Again, this means getting a target audience to do something that they would otherwise not do, or stop doing something that they would otherwise do, without that approach being applied. Policy actions under this approach include expenditures, voluntary/self-regulation efforts, and hybrid or combined methods.

Our Program currently uses a few hybrid or combined methods. These include providing compliance support through our Environmental Quality Team and its efforts to provide compliance information directly to businesses through field visits and over the phone. We also attempt to provide some technology transfer through our research efforts and support for specific fixes that can address hazards, such as helping to fund a new nail salon table with active integrated venting of solvent gasses, and our help to school lab teachers by providing our school chemicals database.

We could expand our activities in this arena by engaging business more around voluntary/self-regulation. We could encourage government agencies who have enforcement authority to provide flexible compliance in the form of reduced penalties for self-reporting of violations. We could also encourage them to offer variances from regulatory requirements for innovative production, use, storage and disposal methods.

## **3.6. Summary and Future Direction**

In summary, our Program is exercising a variety of policy tools derived from the approaches and actions that have been catalogued previously in this chapter. However, we should redouble our efforts to look at the tools that can be used to see if they are being employed to the fullest extent possible. And, we should look at the numerous tools that we are not using and explore the possibilities for their use. We should be committed, as a Program, to attack our mission with as many approaches that might work, to make the public and environment as safe and as free as possible from hazardous chemicals, products and wastes.