

Green Purchasing Policy

Purpose

By including environmental considerations in our purchasing decisions, along with the traditional concerns of price, performance, and availability, the County of Sonoma will promote practices that improve public health and safety, reduce pollution, and conserve natural resources and energy.

Defining Environmentally Preferable

Environmentally preferable products and services are those that have a reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose. This comparison may consider raw materials acquisition, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance, or disposal of the product or service.

When determining if a product is environmentally preferable, the following environmental attributes should be considered (see Appendix A for definitions):

- BioBased
- Biodegradable
- Carcinogen-free
- Chlorofluorocarbon (CC)-free
- Compostable
- Durable
- Energy efficient
- Heavy metal free (e.g., no lead, mercury, cadmium)
- Less hazardous
- Low volatile organic compound (VOC) content
- Low-toxicity
- Made from rapidly renewable materials
- Persistent, bioaccumulative toxic (PBT)-free
- Recyclable
- Recycled content
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Reduced packaging
- Refurbished
- Resource efficiency
- Reusable
- Upgradable
- Water efficient

Balancing Environmental Considerations with Performance, Availability, and Financial Costs

The County is committed to buying more environmentally preferable goods and services as long as they meet performance needs and they are available within a reasonable period of time at a reasonable cost. Nothing in this policy shall be construed as requiring a purchaser or contractor to procure products that do not perform adequately for their intended use, exclude adequate competition (as outlined in Procurement of Goods & Equipment Policies & Procedures), or are not available at a reasonable price or in a reasonable period of time.

The County will consider life cycle costs or best value purchasing strategies when comparing costs of products or services. Life cycle costs include the life of the items, maintenance, operations, end of useful life, residual value, and replacement costs. Best value recognizes that competition exists not only in prices, but also in the technical competence of suppliers, their ability to make timely

deliveries and the quality and performance (including environmental performance) of their products and services. Best value purchasing principles allow flexibility to choose a supplier or contract without the lowest bid providing certain criteria are met that are in the best interests of the County.

Specifications, Solicitation Language, and Purchasing Regulation

The County's Purchasing Division shall ensure wherever possible, that specifications, solicitation language, and purchasing regulations are amended to expand the use of more environmentally preferable products in all procurements.

Whenever possible, specifications shall include the following:

Sonoma County's goal is to expand the purchase and use of environmentally preferable products. In order to meet this goal we are requesting that suppliers complete an environmental (green) survey as part of their bid documentation.

All products and services must meet or exceed the standards set by independent accredited organization in order to be deemed environmentally preferable. Examples of independent accredited organizations recognized by the County are as follows:

- Green Seal www.greenseal.org
- Energy Star www.energystar.gov
- EPEAT www.epeat.net
- Power Smart www.bchydro.com
- ISO 14000 www.iso.org/iso/home.htm
- Sonoma County Water Agency <https://www.sonomawater.org/> (water efficient toilets)
- ABAG www.abag.ca.gov (listings of Green Businesses)

Promoting Environmental Purchasing

The following steps will assist the County in its commitment to purchasing more environmentally preferable goods and services. Goods and services must still meet performance needs and be available in a reasonable period of time at a reasonable cost.

County's Purchasing Division:

1. Will promote the purchase of environmentally preferable products or products with a recycled or recyclable content over a virgin product if the cost is not greater than 5 percent (e.g., 5% preference).
2. Shall ensure wherever possible, that specifications, solicitation language, and purchasing regulations are amended to expand the use of more environmentally preferable products in all procurements.
3. Will consider life cycle or best value costs in its consideration of costs.
4. Will provide information on environmental purchasing on its website and intranet sites.
5. Will continue to post information on the availability of surplus furniture, equipment and office supplies for reuse by other County departments.

County Department:

Are responsible for ensuring that its employees, contractors and suppliers are aware of the County's desire to buy more environmentally preferable goods and services.

Are responsible for ensuring that any of its employees who have been issued credit cards are fully aware of their responsibilities under this policy and other County procurement policies.

Policy Updates

The Purchasing Division will review and update the Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy when necessary.

Reference

- Board adopts Climate Protection Plan by summary action on September 12, 2006
- Res.#89-2195 - Board of Supervisors, Establishment of Policy for Procurement of Recycled Products
- Res.# 2001-025 - Sonoma County Waste Management Agency, Adoption of Green Purchasing Policy
- California Code, Public Contract Code relating to Local Governments and Buy Recycled Programs.

- California Public Contract Code Section 12400-12404
- 1993 U.S. Government Executive Order
- Environmental Purchasing Policies 101: An Overview of Current Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policies, developed for Commission for Environmental Cooperation

Attachments

Appendix A - Environmental Purchasing Definitions

Page Links

1. www.greenseal.org - <http://www.greenseal.org>
2. www.energystar.gov - <http://www.energystar.gov>
3. www.epeat.net - <https://www.epeat.net/>
4. www.bchydro.com - <http://www.bchydro.com>
5. www.iso.org/iso/home.htm - <http://www.iso.org/iso/home.htm>
6. <https://www.sonomawater.org/> - <https://www.sonomawater.org/>
7. www.abag.ca.gov - <http://www.abag.ca.gov>
8. Environmental Purchasing Definitions - [https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/sonoma-public-infrastructure-\(formerly-gs\)/divisions/purchasing/doing-business-with-the-county/green-purchasing-policy/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/sonoma-public-infrastructure-\(formerly-gs\)/divisions/purchasing/doing-business-with-the-county/green-purchasing-policy/environmental-purchasing-definitions](https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/sonoma-public-infrastructure-(formerly-gs)/divisions/purchasing/doing-business-with-the-county/green-purchasing-policy/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/sonoma-public-infrastructure-(formerly-gs)/divisions/purchasing/doing-business-with-the-county/green-purchasing-policy/environmental-purchasing-definitions)