

Product Stewardship Principles

Background

"Product stewardship" is a strategy that directs the producers, sellers, and users of a product to take shared responsibility for the impacts to human health and the environment that result from the production, use, and end-of-life management of the product. The greatest responsibility lies with whoever has the most ability to affect the full life cycle of the product.

This is most often the producer of the product, although other stakeholders include retailers, consumers, and government officials. One of the primary ideas behind product stewardship is to encourage manufacturers to design products with the product end-of-life management in mind. This gives an incentive to create products that are more durable, reusable, and recyclable.

County Roles

Counties have historically been identified as "wastesheds" and have been greatly responsible for solid waste programs. This includes being responsible for meeting state recycling and material recovery goals, ensuring the safe and environmentally responsible disposal of nonrecycled and hazardous materials, well as providing education encouraging the separation of recyclable materials. Product stewardship offers convenience for recycling and provides a way to reduce the potential cost to ratepayers by placing more responsibility on manufacturers to consider full lifecycle impacts of products. This encourages producers to design products that are more durable, reusable, repairable, easier to recycle and less toxic.

Product Stewardship Principles

Product stewardship programs should:

- Have the goal of reducing negative impacts to public health and the environment over the life-cycle of products (from production to distribution, use and disposal).
- Require all producers of a covered product to implement a program as a condition of selling or offering for sale the product in the state.
- Make producers primarily responsible for financing the programs.
- Use existing infrastructure when establishing a collection network where applicable/appropriate.

- Require that end-of-life programs provide convenient, statewide collection service for the public. Convenience of depot collection sites may be measured first by considering public safety and protection of the environment, and then by considering distance to users, the opportunity to recycle several items at one location, economic feasibility, and sustainability.
- Allow local governments to retain the authority to make local decisions regarding other product stewardship collection mechanisms, including curbside collection and collection events, and shall be responsible for funding these alternative programs.
- Require that producers and retailers educate the public to increase awareness of product stewardship programs (including end-of-life management) and inform consumers about the impacts of products over their life-cycle.
- Be regulated and reviewed by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to ensure established requirements are being met. DEQ must be able to demonstrate that all participants in the collection program are meeting the minimum requirements as outlined in Collection Plans. The Department should report to the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission and/or the Oregon State Legislature as appropriate.