

# Toxics Reduction Strategy

A plan for minimizing use of toxic substances of concern in government operations by using the Precautionary Principle.



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# Sustainability Initiative Program

- 2 FTE, Multnomah County - Department of County Management (Director's Office)
- Focus primarily internal government operations
- Demonstrate sustainability:
  - Green Building policy
  - Global Warming action plan
  - Sustainable Procurement Strategy
  - Recycling & waste prevention at county facilities
  - Biodiesel in fleet
  - Food Policy Council & local food purchase in jails
- Where's toxics??



# Pollution in Portland



- Portland (& Multnomah County) has a reputation nationally as a “green” community.
- But toxic pollution a problem here, too:
  - Toxic air pollutants
  - Asthma
  - Fish and river contamination
  - Body burden



# History of Collaboration

- **City of Portland** has been a partner in several other major projects
- Good opportunity to partner with **Oregon Center for Environmental Health**
- Other community partners included: OHSU, PSU, Metro, Oregon Environmental Council.



# Q: How long does this *really* take?

## A: *Three years!*

### May 2003

- Sustainability Forum, Portland: Organized health track for event. Participants and speakers identified a need for a local plan on toxics.

### April 2004

- Hosted workshop on toxics and precaution in Portland in collaboration with Be Safe network and SEHN. Over 130 attendees!

### Summer 2004

- Convened workgroup to provide input for a resolution and report on toxics reduction at the local level in Portland / Multnomah County.

### September 2004

- Released white paper “Precautionary Approaches for Health & the Environment” and City and County adopted initial resolution to develop Toxics Reduction Strategy together.

### May 2005

- Appointed members for a public workgroup to develop Strategy.
- Met as a group for ten months to develop recommendations.

### May 2006

- Multnomah County and City of Portland adopt Toxics Reduction Strategy unanimously!

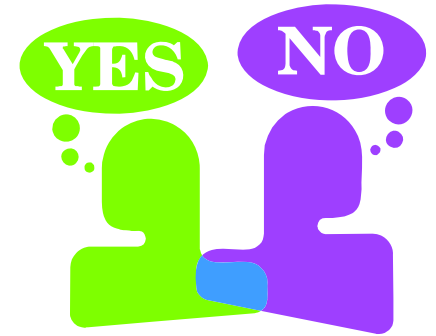


# Strategy Development - *details*

- **During FY06, the appointed workgroup:**
- Identified toxics of most concern locally based on prior assessments;
- Interviewed City and County bureau and department stakeholders;
- Documented current chemical inventory procedures; and
- Reviewed several best practices in toxics reduction.



# Feedback!



Collected stakeholder feedback on draft Strategy  
(Eight weeks total):

- City bureau and county department briefings;
- One-on-one meetings with key departments;
- Two-week public comment period; and
- Sustainable Development Commission open public meeting.



# Goal of Strategy - *Long Term*

- “Use the Precautionary Principle as a framework to replace toxic substances, materials or products of concern with viable least-toxic alternatives by 2020”.



# 40 Proposed Actions



- 40 specific proposed actions to be taken between now and 2015.
  - Actions based on priority pollutants, and where in operations we saw those in-use:
- #2. Develop a comprehensive **purchasing policy**, standard specifications and procurement guidelines.
  - #3. **Involve vendors in** demonstrate that their product(s) are safe
  - #4. Conduct an **inventory** of all chemicals, products and substances annually.
  - #8. Develop **outreach and education program**
  - #10. Seek effective, least-toxic alternatives to **disinfectants** containing toxic substances.
  - #13. Promote the purchase of **PVC-free office supplies** by City and County staff.
  - #23. Implement comprehensive **emission reduction** programs.
  - #26. Install **mercury amalgam separators** at County dental clinics.
  - #36. Develop an implementation plan to expand **progressive IPM practices** to all property owned, operated or maintained by the City or County.



# What happens to the actions?

- Steering Committee - accountability
- Staff workgroups for each action
- Alternatives assessment:
  - Seek alternatives that pose the least potential threat, using the best information available; toxicity is one factor.
  - For an alternative to be viable, it must be effective, affordable and available.



# Next Steps

- Formation of Steering Committee;
- Finalize implementation process for Strategy; and
- Focus on initial proposed actions including purchasing policy.



# A note on Social Sustainability...



- Health & environment connection a natural fit for social services agency
- Protecting human health and reducing local government's contribution to toxic pollution easy concept for leaders to grasp



# Contact Me!

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