

Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, FEB. 15, 2006

CONTACT: Regina Dick-Endrizzi
(415) 554-6783

BOARD ADOPTS MIRKARIMI MEASURE TO HOLD PRODUCERS RESPONSIBLE FOR DISPOSAL, RECYCLING COSTS

SAN FRANCISCO (Feb. 15, 2006)—The San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to pass a resolution Tuesday, February 14, that urges state legislators to enact producer responsibility laws. The Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) resolution, sponsored by Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, asks the state to take the financial burden of disposing toxic products off of taxpayers and onto manufacturers. The resolution comes at the heels of a newly enacted state law that bans a wide range of common household hazardous waste products from the trash.

“Producer responsibility legislation makes sense. Taxpayers and local governments shell out millions in dollars every year to handle toxic and other products,” explains Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi. “It’s time we push corporations to take responsibility of their own actions and products.”

The state ban covers products designated as “universal waste,” which includes common household batteries, fluorescent lights, items that contain mercury, and an array of electronic devices. In San Francisco alone the estimated annual cost of handling just these newly listed household hazardous products tops \$5 million. The passage of the resolution also clears the way for the City to support additional EPR programs for materials that have high handling costs, and materials that often end up in our the landfills.

“Producer responsibility will both drive business innovation and improve public health,” added Supervisor Mirkarimi. “When we hold corporations responsible for making sure the products they sell are recycled properly, and when public health and environmental costs are factored into the product price, the company has a strong incentive to design goods that last longer, are easily recyclable, and less toxic.”

Producer responsibility laws have been enacted in countries around the world, in Europe, Asia, and Latin America. In 2004, California enacted the Cell Phone Recycling Act. This law requires that cell phone retailers have in place a system for the acceptance and collection of used cell phones for reuse, recycling, or proper disposal. Examples of producer responsibility programs include take back programs, deposits, and advance recycling fees.

In the meantime, the City has partnered with local businesses and non-profits to provide free drop-off sites for certain products. All Walgreens in San Francisco as well as retailers including Waldeck's Office Supply take household batteries. Several local hardware stores including Brownie's, Cliff's Variety and Cole Hardware take fluorescent lights. Goodwill stores takes computers and their components. A variety of hazardous materials are also accepted at the public Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility, operated by San Francisco Recycling and Disposal. For a complete list, go to www.sfenvironment.org.

###