



## TECHnews

The latest information for SWANA's technical division members.

### Special Waste Management

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## Forming Product Stewardship Councils to Support Extended Producer Responsibility

*Lois Courchaine, Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority*

There is a looming crisis in California and the nation -- a predicament that directly impacts local governments' budgets and staff. That crisis is the flood of toxic waste products. In California, the crisis has been brought into focus by a 2006 landfill ban on batteries, fluorescent lights, non-empty aerosol cans, mercury-containing products and many electronics. Local governments have had to pay the price for disposing those items – a classic unfunded mandate.

In response, a coalition of local governments and associations across California joined forces to form the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC). CPSC organizes local governments to speak with one voice for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and seeks to change California's product waste management system from one focused on government funding and ratepayer financed waste diversion to one that puts responsibility, instead, on the producers and users of toxic products.

Several voluntary EPR programs are operating in the U.S. The Thermostat Recycling Corporation and the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation are the right kind of industry-funded programs. But they are underutilized and not capturing the large majority of covered products. CPSC believes that legislation is needed both to level the playing field and to ensure results

Local governments across the country can no longer bear the financial burden for a flood of hazardous products designed for disposal. Finding permanent solutions that are convenient and cost effective for consumers is crucial. If every state in the nation formed a Product Stewardship Council like the ones in the Northwest ([www.productstewardship.net](http://www.productstewardship.net)) and California, imagine the impact on national policy!

For more information on the California Product Stewardship Council and Extended Producer Responsibility, please visit [www.caproductstewardship.org](http://www.caproductstewardship.org). If you would like to start a Product Stewardship Council in your state or region, contact Bill Sheehan, Director of the Product Policy Institute at 706-613-0710 or [bill@productpolicy.org](mailto:bill@productpolicy.org).

If you are interested in these exciting topics, attend SWANA's Thinking Outside the Blue Box 2008. Here we will have sessions on Local Product Stewardship Councils and Extended Producer Responsibility for a number of products including electronics and CFLs. [Go here to register.](#)