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SONOMA FIRST TO SUPPORT PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP COUNTYWIDE

County, Cities and Waste Management Agency Support Waste and Toxics Reduction To Protect Taxpayers and Ratepayers

Cloverdale, California (November 15, 2010) – Last Wednesday, the Cloverdale City Council adopted a resolution supporting Product Stewardship, making Sonoma the first county in California in which all of the incorporated cities, the County Board of Supervisors and the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency (SCWMA) have formally supported product stewardship policy. Product Stewardship is a policy approach that requires product manufacturers to share in the responsibility for end-of-life management for the products they produce.

Cloverdale was the 108th local government to pass a resolution in support of product stewardship, including neighboring Counties of Napa, Marin and Mendocino and cities statewide including Roseville, Eureka, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Burbank, as well as national organizations including the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and statewide organizations including the California League of Cities, the Regional Council of Rural Counties – all calling for product stewardship legislation. For a full list of supporting jurisdictions, go to <http://www.calpsc.org/policies/local/index.html> .

Sonoma County spends more than \$100,000 each month managing household hazardous waste (HHW) generated by residents of Cotati, Cloverdale, Healdsburg, Petaluma, Rohnert Park, Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Sonoma, Windsor and the unincorporated County. Sonoma County, like many counties in California, struggles to balance the increase in demand for products banned from landfills against falling HHW operating budgets.

Although the State of California has banned hazardous and problematic products from disposal such as household batteries, fluorescent lamps, paint and sharps (needles and lancets) from landfills, there is no sustainably funded collection system for these products. Ultimately, that means costs have been externalized onto taxpayers and ratepayers to manage these products.

“Our communities understand very clearly that the system we now have in California to manage toxic and problematic products is just not sustainable. Local governments cannot continue to shoulder this responsibility alone, and should not have to. That is why our local governments have made their voices heard – we want a better system and that system is product stewardship,” said SCWMA Interim Executive Director, Susan Klassen. “We are proud of our distinction as the first County in the state to have all of our city governments, County government and Waste Management Agency speaking together, urging the state to enact stewardship legislation.”

Product Stewardship uses the free market forces to incentivize producers to fully fund management of their products and packaging waste by designing more durable, less toxic products that are easier to repair and recycle. When producers develop, fund and manage “take-back” programs, they can achieve economies of

scale that reduce recycling costs and ensure that products are managed from “cradle to cradle” versus “cradle to grave,” with no additional cost charged to manage the product at end-of-life.

“We’re dedicated to reversing the trend of California producing more waste. California taxpayers and ratepayers spend more than \$100 million a year to manage household hazardous waste,” says Heidi Sanborn, Executive Director of the California Product Stewardship Council. “With the support of local governments like Sonoma County, we move one step closer to reducing the public costs of waste management by engaging the private sector. It’s a just a better system - one that incentivizes green design and supports the growth of green jobs.”

About the California Product Stewardship Council:

The California Product Stewardship Council is a not-for-profit, non government agency dedicated to shifting California’s product waste management system from one focused on government funded and ratepayer financed waste diversion to one that relies on producer responsibility. CPSC is working toward this goal to reduce public costs and drive improvements in product design.

CPSC strives to: (1) Build capacity and knowledge among local governments, and build relationships with stakeholders, to bring about producer financed and managed systems for product discards, including, but not restricted to, products covered by the Universal Waste Ban; (2) Provide a forum for the exchange of information regarding existing and proposed Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs; (3) Develop and recommend practical local and statewide EPR policy and educational tools such as model ordinances and legislation, newsletters, articles, policy briefings, etc.; (4) Provide effective leadership on EPR initiatives in California and develop a prioritized list, with timelines, of future EPR programs; and, (5) Educate elected and appointed officials and other decision makers on the benefits to local government of EPR. For more information, go to www.calpsc.org
