



COUNTY OF LAKE
Public Services Department
333 Second St.
Lakeport, CA 95453
Telephone (707) 262-1618
FAX (707) 262-0973
Web www.recycling.co.lake.ca.us



CPSC
**California Product
Stewardship Council** SM

MEDIA CONTACTS: Terre Logsdon, (707) 262-1760
Heidi Sanborn, (916) 480-9010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LAKE COUNTY SUPPORTS WASTE AND TOXICS REDUCTION
TO PROTECT TAXPAYERS AND RATEPAYERS**

Lake County Adopts Resolution Supporting Product Stewardship

Lakeport, CA, California – Showing support for taxpayers, ratepayers, the landfill, and the environment, the Lake County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution supporting Product Stewardship, otherwise known as “Extended Producer Responsibility” (EPR) on Tuesday, January 04, 2011.

Product Stewardship is a policy approach which shifts the cost for product waste management from the County, taxpayers, and garbage ratepayers to the producers of products, who incorporate the cost into the purchase price of the product, so only those who purchase the product pay the costs of recycling or disposal.

Product Stewardship uses the free market to incentivize producers to share in the responsibility for managing their products and packaging waste by designing more durable, less toxic products that are easier to repair. 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 recycle the product at end-of-life.

Although the State of California has banned hazardous products such as household batteries, fluorescent lamps and paint from landfill disposal, there is no sustainably funded collection system for these products. Ultimately, that leaves the costs of handling these waste products to be borne by taxpayers and ratepayers and the County of Lake.

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Other products like Sharps (needles and lancets), and packaging aren't toxic, but they do pose a burden to local governments due to public health costs and, in the case of packaging, the costs of litter clean-up.

"If we only concern ourselves with the disposal of a product, we miss significant opportunities to reduce the overall cost to manage these products by designing them more efficiently in the first place," said Denise Rushing, District 3 Supervisor. "All stakeholders in the product chain need to share in the responsibility whether it's the producer creating a greener design, local government providing public education, retailers, or the consumers returning the product for recycling."

"Now is the time to encourage and reward green design and we're proud to be on the forefront of this necessary and positive change," said Rushing.

The Lake County Public Services Department provides a household hazardous waste management program (HazMobile) for all residents of Lake County through a contract with Mendocino Solid Waste Management Authority. This service is funded through gate fees at the landfill and minimal grant funds. HazMobile services cost the County approximately \$70,000 per year, with grants funding less than \$1,000 of that total.

Because it is illegal to dispose of "sharps" (needles and lancets) in the trash (it's a public health and safety measure) the County sponsors the Sharps-By-Mail program, which is available at all pharmacies in Lake County. Consumers pay a \$5.00 co-pay to utilize the service and the County covers the remaining \$16.00 per person, which averages \$500 per month or nearly \$6,000 per year.

Statistics vary, but it is estimated that the statewide percentage of households using local government-sponsored Household Hazardous waste programs is no more than 5 percent. This means that approximately 95% of the residentially-generated household hazardous waste in California is unaccounted for. Clearly, the current system is not working and local governments, including the County of Lake, cannot afford to offer expanded services.

"It's true that recycling more saves businesses money – it did for me," said Bill Stone of A & B Collision in Clearlake, who after receiving a waste audit, found that he could recycle half of his waste stream, saving his business \$1,200 per year. "But it would make more sense if the amount of packaging was reduced and wouldn't have to be recycled in the first place."

Lake County joins 112 other California cities and counties that support “Producer Responsibility”, including the cities of San Jose, Roseville and Fresno and the counties of Los Angeles, San Bernardino, San Francisco, and Butte. For a full list of supporting jurisdictions, go to www.CalPSC.org.

In order to build knowledge and capacity among California local governments, retailers, producers, and other stakeholders, to start the transition from government managed and financed product end-of-life (EOL) systems to producer managed and financed EOL systems for products banned from the trash, the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) has provided funding to assist California local governments in the adoption of EPR Resolutions such as this one.

“We’re dedicated to reversing the trend of California producing more waste. Hazardous waste costs alone exceed over \$100 million a year to California taxpayers and ratepayers,” says Heidi Sanborn, Executive Director of the California Product Stewardship Council. “With the support of local governments such as Lake County and partnering with businesses like A & B Collision, we move one step closer to reducing public costs of waste management by involving the private sector.”

For more information, or to schedule an interview, call Heidi Sanborn, CPSC executive director at (916) 480-9010.

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
