

## Paint Stewardship Means More Recycling Options

By: Heidi Sanborn, California Product Stewardship Council

Paint is such a big part of Spring Maintenance for Rental Housing owners and managers, the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC) thought it would be helpful to tell you about a new state program to manage leftover paint that will impact every paint purchaser and user in the state. CPSC is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote the use of Product Stewardship policy for problem waste products in California. Leftover paint is a very big economic and environmental problem for local governments across California and we will explain what the problem is, how it is being solved, and how that will impact your rental housing business.

CPSC is the primary grant partner to San Joaquin County along with Tehama and San Francisco counties on a statewide grant from the Department of Resources, Recovery and Recycling (CalRecycle). We branded the grant work project by calling it the “Be Paint Wise Partnership.”



The primary Be Paint Wise Partnership project goals are the following:

- To educate consumers about how to buy the right amount of paint
- Establish paint “swaps” where leftover paint can be left for others who need it
- Establish convenient take-back locations for paint recycling
- Encourage reuse and purchase of recycled-content paint
- Develop a statewide product stewardship program for paint, which will be handed over to the paint manufacturers.

The lessons learned from this grant and how paint stewardship will impact rental housing owners is explained below.

## The Paint Problem – The Stewardship Solution

More than 74 million gallons of paint are sold each year in California, according to CalRecycle. But not all paint sold is being used, which creates leftover paint that must be properly managed. Because there are not enough convenient ways to recycle paint, contractors and others store enormous amounts of leftover paint in garages and on their property, which can have negative environmental impacts.



Photo taken at a home near Oroville, California in 2009

Landfilling leftover liquid paint is banned in California, so local governments have been collecting paint through household hazardous waste (HHW) facilities since the early 1990's. Although the facilities are only seeing a small percentage of leftover paint – approximately 5% of what is leftover – they still collect two million gallons each year **costing approximately \$27 million annually** to manage. With low recovery rates and high cost, California needed a better option which is why the state looked to product stewardship as a sustainable funding and management solution.

Product Stewardship, otherwise known as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a policy approach to managing many types of problem waste products such as paint. The approach transfers the cost of product waste management to the producers, and ultimately they pass those costs on to the consumers, so the costs are no longer born by the general public through increased taxes or garbage rates. The approach is used around the world as a way to stop socializing the costs of expensive waste products and allow consumers to see the full cost of the product and choose if that is the right purchase for them.

In 2010, California became only the second state in the nation to pass stewardship legislation for managing leftover architectural paint when former Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 1343 (Huffman) into law. Because of this law, which was supported by paint manufacturers, retailers and local governments, starting July 1, 2012, the paint industry will begin operating a statewide stewardship program for paint through a non-profit called PaintCare. PaintCare is also responsible for Oregon's paint stewardship program which started July 2010 and along with the

lessons learned from the Be Paint Wise Partnership grant project, both will provide the foundation for California's future program.

### **Paint Recycling Becomes Much Easier**

The future statewide program will target “architectural paint,” which the law defines as interior and exterior architectural coatings sold in containers of five gallons or less for commercial or homeowner use, but does not include aerosol spray paint or architectural coatings purchased for industrial or original equipment manufacturer use. Contractors and do-it-yourselfers alike will benefit from the new program.

“Our goal is to create a network of take-back sites throughout the state to make it easier for do-it-yourselfers and contractors to recycle leftover paint,” explains PaintCare Executive Director, Alison Keane. “We’re currently working with stakeholders to understand the current infrastructure and develop the parameters for establishing collection sites.” The program will include many existing HHW programs and is expected to increase the total number of collection sites throughout the state significantly, giving consumers convenient, local options for paint recycling. “Ideally, we’d like you to be able to recycle leftover paint at the same place you purchase new paint,” adds Keane.



Vision's employee picks-up paint from Red Bluff Paint Mart.

Consumers can expect a small increase in the cost of new paint purchases in order to fund the take-back program. California's fee structure hasn't been determined yet, but is expected to be similar to Oregon's fee structure. Oregon's per-container assessment fee is:

- \$0.35 for pints and quarts

- \$0.75 for one gallon containers
- \$1.60 for two to five gallon containers.

Abby Boudouris, Household Hazardous Waste Coordinator with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, explains the program benefits. “Local governments are saving money, we’re seeing collection sites in places where there previously was no service, and the services that were already in place are now more convenient for consumers.”

Product Care’s President, Mark Kurschner, explained that some painting contractors were wary of the new system at first. “It’s not unusual for people to be concerned about how a new system will actually play out. But the response has been very positive and we’ve been able to help many painting contractors properly recycle large quantities of paint.” Product Care is the non-profit organization that manages Oregon’s paint stewardship program on behalf of PaintCare.

Paint retailers are expected to benefit from the stewardship system, too. Steve Dearborn, President and CEO of Miller Paint has experience with Oregon’s program both as a retailer and as a paint manufacturer. “As a retailer, we’re often on the front line introducing customers to the program for the first time. We’re offering the community a solution for all the paint that’s been stored in garages. We’re also selling recycled paint in the store, which shows that we’re closing the loop. And as a manufacturer, we feel like we’re properly managing our product.” Dearborn added that his stores are seeing new visitors who come to recycle paint and that represents an opportunity to convert those visitors to future customers.

To find a location near you that will take back paint from businesses, you can search by zip code at [Earth911.com](http://Earth911.com).

For the paint that is collected, some can be reused, some may be recycled into new paint, and that which cannot be recycled into new paint can be recycled into other products, including being used as an additive to cement or burned (such is the case for oil-based paint) to use as a fuel.

### **Buying Recycled Content Paint – Low Cost and High Quality**

How can property owners save money, improve service to their tenants and do something good for the environment? Buy Green Seal certified recycled-content paint.

Everyone these days is looking to cut expenses, but the last thing anyone can afford is to sacrifice quality for cost savings. Not only does recycled paint cost about 40% less than virgin paint, but buying Green Seal certified paint means you will get a product that has been rigorously tested and proven to perform by the Master Painters Institute (MPI), a nationally recognized paint performance certification organization.



Ace Hardware Store display for Visions Green Seal Certified recycled content paint.

Recycled Content Paints certified by Green Seal are posted on the Green Seal website:  
<http://www.greenseal.org/FindGreenSealProductsandServices.aspx?vid=ViewProductDetail&cid=10>

Creating market demand for recycled paint helps ensure an end-use for this valuable resource as well as reducing costs to local government. Ultimately, this benefits businesses because as garbage ratepayers and taxpayers, you fund local government operated hazardous waste programs.

Encouraging the use of recycled-content paint is a primary goal of the grant project as the partners recognize that the future viability of the recycled paint market depends on consumer demand for recycled paint. Two Green Seal certified paint remanufacturing plants exist in California: Visions Paint Recycling in Sacramento and Amazon Environmental in Riverside. They all make custom colors.

Using recycled paint also helps support California jobs, improves the economy and utilizes a non-renewable resource, titanium dioxide, which would otherwise go to waste.

State governments and the American Coatings Association saw the problem and worked for two years to develop the Green Seal recycled paint standard. To achieve Green Seal certification, the new paint has to be filtered, ph tested, and more, and ultimately must pass the same performance tests as virgin paint. Green Seal certification means that a product has been tested according to

science-based procedures, works as well or better than others in its class, and has been evaluated without bias or conflict of interest.

Meeting these standards of quality and performance is no small achievement.

There's never been a better time to try recycled-content paint. You can help improve your property's green image, support green jobs and reduce taxpayer costs and improve the environment. It's not often you can do all that and save money, too!

### **Property Managers – Do the Right Thing AND Save Money**

Apartment managers and owners, who paint apartments frequently, will greatly benefit from the program. Although the cost of recycling the paint is now in the product price, which means paying more up front, it comes with the benefit of free recycling at local paint retailers, making proper management much more convenient. It also ensures that as property management businesses, taxes and garbage rates won't climb due to paint management costs. There will also be a wide range of Green Seal certified paint available to purchase locally at prices lower than virgin paint.

“This is an exciting time for product stewardship,” said Heidi Sanborn, executive director of the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC). “California local governments are finally going to see some financial relief. Paint alone accounts for about fifty-percent of most household hazardous waste programs’ disposal costs so this program will have tremendous statewide impact.” But the benefits go beyond cost savings for taxpayers and garbage ratepayers. Sanborn points out, “We have already seen an increase in green jobs as California’s paint recyclers gear up to handle more paint, so the statewide program is really a win-win.”