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Annual Report: 2010 San Francisco Buy Green Program for City Staff

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I. Executive Summary

San Francisco Department of the Environment (SFE) and Office of Contract Administration (OCA) lead the implementation of the City's Precautionary Purchasing Ordinance ([SF Environment Code, Chapt. 2](#)). Major accomplishments for 2010 include:

- Overall purchases of green products increased from 80% (2009) to 91% (only for batteries, computers, janitorial, lighting, toners).
- The percent of green computer monitors purchased increased from 31% to 53%.
- Because of new strategies (e.g., online Buy Green Scorecard; partnership with SFE Climate Team, Buy Green Club of Year Award):
 - Increased the number of Buy Green Leaders from zero to 38 (one per department).
 - Increased departments that participated in Buy Green Ordinance Consultations from six (2007-10) to 38 (2011).
- Created a [new website of over 1,000 green products for City staff, consumers and businesses](#).

Total percentages of green products bought (out of total purchases in each targeted category): 81% for computers, 80% for janitorial cleaners, 81% for janitorial papers, 32% for lighting bulbs/tubes, 79% for lighting ballasts, 99% for office papers, 42% for rechargeable batteries, and 26% for toner cartridges.

II. Introduction

A. *History and Mandate*

San Francisco has been buying green products since the 1980s, but purchasing requirements were scattered among several ordinances. In 1998, the City undertook an ambitious [Green Purchasing Pilot Program](#) which:

- Inventoried and assessed hazardous chemical products purchased by City departments
- Established environmental and health criteria
- Set priorities and field tested products.

In 2003, San Francisco became the first city in the nation to adopt the [Precautionary Principle](#). The Precautionary Principle requires that City government take a proactive approach to reducing the potential harm in its operations. Based on the best available science, the City must select products and processes that present the least potential threat to human health and the City's natural systems.

In 2005, San Francisco enacted the [Precautionary Purchasing Ordinance](#) (Environment Code, Chapt. 2). The Ordinance established goals and procedures for environmentally preferable purchasing (green purchasing) by City agencies. This ordinance was groundbreaking in its application of the Precautionary Principle and in its mandate that purchasers for the city may only buy commodities from "approved alternative product lists" for targeted product categories. The "approved alternative products" are now synonymous with REQUIRED products on the SF Approved List ([SFApproved.org](#)), which is San Francisco's own directory of green products.

B. *Selection of Green Products*

The SFE Green Purchasing Program recognizes three overriding goals in its selection of SF Approved products:

- Performance: Does the product work well? Is it durable? Does it make efficient use of resources?
- Impact: Does the product have impacts on the environment, worker health, or public health?
- Cost: Considering all the alternatives - and the full life cycle of the product - is it cost-effective?

SFE is primarily involved with determining impacts, but facilitates conversations among City end users and OCA to address performance and cost issues. In 2009 and 2010, SFE began categorizing products on its lists as either "Required," "Suggested," "Limited Use" or "Prohibited" products.

REQUIRED PRODUCTS: Products that City Depts. are REQUIRED to buy have met all three goals, (performance, impact and cost). Performance is gauged by end user feedback and subsequent inclusion in a citywide contract

SUGGESTED PRODUCTS: These are products that meet San Francisco’s environmental and health criteria, but may not have been fully evaluated for cost or performance. City departments are encouraged to try suggested products.

LIMITED USE PRODUCTS: In some targeted product categories, such as lamps and ballasts, certain older, noncompliant products may still be included in City contracts to accommodate existing infrastructure.

PROHIBITED PRODUCTS: These listings are not comprehensive and are only reminders to City staff.

C. Total Contracts & Products in the SF Approved List

Sub-Categories	Green Citywide Contracts	Required Subcategories	Suggested Subcategories	Limited Use Subcategories	Prohibited Subcategories
93	14	30	58	6	5

D. Summary of Past Annual Reports

Table A compares the percentage changes in green purchases from 2008 through 2010.

E. Scope of Report

This report covers the calendar year 2010. Previous reports can be found at: sfenvironment.org/sfapproved.

F. Staff That Worked on Green Purchasing in 2010

OCA		SFE
Bill Jones	Judy Wong	Chris Geiger
Galen Leung	Ken Easton	Jessian Choy
Jaci Fong	Naomi Kelly	Julie Bryant
Jennifer Browne	Pamela Olivier	Soko Made

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE): 2.5, including the OCA Green Purchaser funded by SFE since 2008. This figure does not include significant time spent by other OCA staff on various “green” citywide contracts.

II. 2010 Accomplishments

A. City Green Product Champions

The City thanks staff that bought green batteries, foodware, janitorial cleaners and papers, lighting, and paper (see page 6). That list of who bought what allows SFE to:

1. Thank and give green prizes to staff that bought green.
2. Ask staff why they bought limited use/prohibited products. If they say a green product didn't work, we have info to help decide whether we should promote it. About 90% of 150 staff from 38 depts. said they'd recommend the Buy Green Consultation which includes this friendly discussion.
3. Enhance behavior change. People can't change unless they get constructive feedback.
4. Let each Dept. Buy Green Leader know who to thank or reach out to.

B. New Green Contracts & Products

Contracts & products	Products
1. Antifreeze	3. Compostable bags
2. Multi-function devices (all-in-one printer, fax, scanner)	4. Motor Oil (Re-refined)
	5. All-Purpose Lubricants
	6. Hydraulic Fluid: Biobased
	7. Industrial Lubricant: Re-refined
	8. Industrial Lubricant: Synthetic
	9. Motor/Engine Oil: Re-refined
	10. Penetrating oils
	11. Rust Inhibitors
	12. Transmission Fluid
	13. Vanishing Oils
	14. Shop towels for auto shops

C. *New Behavior Change Strategies*

In 2010, SFE pursued several new strategies to increase green purchasing among City departments:

- Increased departments that accepted a Buy Green Ordinance Consultation from 6 (2007-10) to 38 (2011). In 2012, we can measure the impact this outreach had on City purchases.
- Got 38 depts. to select Buy Green Leaders and fill out the Buy Green Scorecard, thanks to generous assistance from the Climate Team. The Scorecard is a new online tool that immediately calculates the department's score, giving them an opportunity to improve their practices before the final submission. Departments earn points for doing things like buying green from SFApproved.org or posting pledges to buy green.
- Started the Buy Green Club of Year Award, with selected green products as prizes. [San Francisco Public Library scored the highest](#) and was honored at the [Blue & Green Awards](#) Ceremony.
- Rebranded "trainings" as "consultations" so staff will know we want their ideas.
- Made it easier for staff to find green products by merging 6 spreadsheets into [SFApproved.org](#), a new site of over 1,000 green products. Broadened audience to include consumers and businesses.
- Trained over almost 500 City staff through 12 consultations.

III. Ideas to Increase Green Product Purchases

Despite our best efforts, City departments still spent over \$550,000 on limited use or prohibited products in 2010. Some ideas we are currently pursuing to improve green purchasing performance are listed below.

A. *Use performance appraisals to motivate staff to buy green*

SF Dept. of Human Resources is considering SFE's proposal to have the performance appraisal include an optional reminder for staff to buy green from SFApproved.org. If staff who bought green could formally receive positive feedback from their supervisor, it would be more effective than praise from SFE staff they only meet once a year. There are still many staff who do not know about the Buy Green Ordinance, despite mass emails through the Mayor to all directors & staff and trainings of 600 City staff from 2008-2010.

B. *Require customized online catalogs for City purchases*

SFE and OCA successfully customized the office supply online store so that City staff are not able to buy certain prohibited products. At all consultations SFE gave to 700 staff from 25 departments in 2010-11, City staff said this idea is more efficient than checking SFApproved.org before they shop with city contracted vendors.

C. *Revamp City purchasing software*

Since it is hard for staff to recall all the green products they are required to buy, it may be more efficient to help create a City purchasing system that steers staff to buy green.

IV. Table A. Summary of green purchases 2008-10

V. Tables B-E: City champions that bought green in 2010