



Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance

MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE



State Resource Recovery Program Recommendations Report

The state as a leader in waste and toxicity reduction, reuse, recycling, promotion of environmentally preferable products, and resource conservation

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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
<i>Organization and purpose of report</i>	<i>2</i>
Waste and Toxicity Reduction, Reuse, Recycling, and Organics Recovery.....	3
<i>Waste and toxicity reduction recommendations.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Reuse of materials recommendations</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Recycling efforts recommendations.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Organics recovery recommendations.....</i>	<i>5</i>
Procurement and End-of-Life Management.....	5
<i>Recommendations for incorporating environmental criteria into state contracts.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Recommendations for environmentally preferable purchasing training.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Recommendations for tracking and evaluation of environmentally preferable purchasing.....</i>	<i>7</i>
Energy Conservation and Alternative Fuels.....	7
<i>Recommendations for energy conservation in state-owned and wholly state-leased buildings.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Recommendations for alternative fuel vehicles and fuel procurement</i>	<i>8</i>
Conclusion.....	9

Introduction

In this report required by Minn. Stat. § 115A.15, (www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/115A/15.html), the Office of Environmental Assistance (OEA) and the Department of Commerce (DOC) offer recommendations to the state's Resource Recovery Program and will show stakeholders that the State of Minnesota is willing to examine its record as:

- a waste manager, a recycler, reducer, and reuser of discarded materials
- an environmental manager through its environmentally preferable procurement practices
- a resource and energy consumer and a generator of various types of waste
- a role model for compliance with resource recovery laws, policies, and guidelines



The State of Minnesota holds itself accountable for its resource recovery activities through the Department of Administration and continues to work on and seek out options for improvement or enhancement of those activities.

Organization and purpose of report

This report covers two major topics, which align with the responsibilities of the Department of Administration's Resource Recovery Office (RRO) and Materials Management Division (MMD):

- reduction, reuse, recycling, and organics recovery
- procurement and end-of-life management

In addition to the requirements set forth in Minn. Stat. § 115A.15, the OEA and Department of Commerce offer recommendations in the following topic areas:

- energy conservation
- alternative fuel vehicles and fuel procurement.

We continue to encourage the Department of Administration to implement several recommendations that appeared in previous reports. These recommendations are noted as *ongoing*. New recommendations that have not appeared in previous reports are noted as *new*.

In order to be more useful and user friendly, this report is a condensed and streamlined version of previous reports. Staff from the Office of Environmental Assistance and Department of Commerce are available to assist the Department of Administration in implementation of the recommendations contained in this report.

Waste and Toxicity Reduction, Reuse, Recycling, and Organics Recovery

This section discusses promoting the reduction of waste and toxins generated by state agencies, separating and recovering reusable commodities, separating and recovering recyclable commodities and surplus property, and recovery of organic material.

The Resource Recovery Office's FY 2002 general fund base budget was reduced by \$140,000, resulting in the loss of two full-time positions at the State Recycling Center. At the beginning of FY 2003, the Department of Administration entered into discussions with the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance to work with the RRO to explore ways to reinstate full recycling services for all existing locations served by the RRO within existing budget constraints. The result was a comprehensive assessment of the RRO's operation to be conducted in two phases. Phase 1 involved conducting an immediate general assessment in order to provide enough short-term efficiency improvements. The Phase 1 Report was included in the 2002 Recommendations Report. The Phase 2 assessment to identify long-term efficiency improvements and changes that could be made to the RRO program began in the fall of 2002 and was completed in early 2003. The Phase 2 Assessment Report is available on the OEA's web site at www.moea.state.mn.us and includes 12 recommendations for continued improvement of the program.

State agencies in the Capitol Complex recycled 64 percent by weight of their discarded materials in FY 2003. Within the seven-county metropolitan area, 71 percent was recycled by state agencies. The statutory recycling goal under Minn. Stat. § 115A.15, subd. 9, is 60 percent.

Waste and toxicity reduction recommendations

The Department of Administration should:

- encourage building owners to use environmentally preferable products. *—ongoing*
- encourage mailings to be sent out via e-mail, and instead of printing reports and/or other information, put them on the agency web site for people to read or reference. *—ongoing*
- send Request for Proposals (RFPs) electronically to bidders whenever possible and encourage bidders to send responses to RFPs electronically. *—NEW*
- use the materials developed by the OEA (www.reduce.org) to educate employees on the benefits of reducing paper waste. *—NEW*
- promote surplus supplies from the Resource Recovery Office and Materials Management Division Surplus Service that are available for state agencies to use. *—NEW*

Recommendations for enhancing current efforts to reduce waste and toxicity

The Department of Administration should continue to:

- make available to state agencies refillable pens and pencils rather than disposables. *—ongoing*
- provide for replacement of mercury thermometers with digital or other alternatives. *—ongoing*
- encourage the use of soy inks, wherever feasible. *—ongoing*
- promote the reuse of envelopes, especially envelopes that are sent internally. *—ongoing*

Reuse of materials recommendations

The Department of Administration should:

- encourage vendors to use reusable transport packaging (RTP) and use RTP where possible in the state system. An RTP directory is available online at www.moea.state.mn.us/transport/about.cfm. –*ongoing*
- require any person or entity that receives a surplus or used state computer or other electronics product to properly dispose of it, if not already included under the state disposal contract. –*ongoing*

Recommendations for enhancing current efforts to reuse materials

The Department of Administration should continue to:

- expand the reuse of surplus state government property by creating an online surplus exchange program or using an existing one (e.g., the Minnesota Materials Exchange Alliance–www.mnexchange.org). Agencies could advertise their surplus property on the web site as well as post a “materials needed” request. By using the Minnesota Materials Exchange Program, all the waste being diverted from landfills could be tracked and publicized. –*ongoing*

Recycling efforts recommendations

The Department of Administration should:

- offer consulting services from the OEA to state offices that have not met the statutory recycling goal of 60 percent. The OEA could perform a “recycling and waste audit” of the offices and provide recommendations for increasing recycling. –*ongoing*
- utilize existing resources to remind employees of state recycling efforts and provide agencies with management support pieces that can be mailed to employees on how to reduce, reuse, and recycle at state facilities. –*ongoing*
- establish requirements in state construction contract RFPs that recyclable materials such as corrugated cardboard, steel, aluminum, and carpet be recovered from building/remodeling projects and recycled. –*ongoing*
- evaluate and implement more cost-effective methods of providing recycling services to state agencies by implementing the recommendations from the *Phase 2 Report on the Department of Administration's Resource Recovery Operation*. –*NEW*
- require recycling containers be conveniently placed in all state offices. –*NEW*

Recommendations for enhancing current recycling efforts

The Department of Administration should continue to implement the recommendations from the Phase 1 and 2 Assessment of the Recycling Program Review.

Organics recovery recommendations

The Department of Administration should:

- expand efforts to recover organic materials from the Department of Health and Human Services building, Labor and Commerce building, and the Capitol Complex area. –*NEW*
- develop purchasing contracts for biodegradable products, such as plates, cups and flatware to be used in cafeterias where organics collection programs have been implemented. –*NEW*

Procurement and End-of-Life Management

Procuring recyclable commodities and procuring commodities containing recycled materials and other environmentally preferable products is an important part of the state's resource recovery efforts. In addition to procurement issues, this section discusses more sustainable green building techniques in construction and remodeling, and conserving natural resources through energy-related efforts.

Recommendations for incorporating environmental criteria into state contracts

The Department of Administration should:

- report to the Legislature on the status of agency environmentally preferable purchasing. –*ongoing*
- implement the Department of Administration's refined environmentally preferable purchasing processes to provide a statutorily allowable preference (Minn. Stat. § 16B.121 www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/16B/121.html) within each bid and proposal, which is based on the post-consumer content of the products under consideration. For example, products that contain 100 percent post-consumer content will receive the full 10 percent preference allowed. Products that contain 50 percent post-consumer content will receive a 5 percent preference. MMD should communicate this enhancement to agency staff with delegated authority and include the process in all training for delegated purchasing authority. –*ongoing*
- use default purchasing for items with environmentally preferable attributes without additional cost. –*ongoing*
- follow the Public Entities Law, which requires state facilities to include a provision in waste management contracts for waste to be processed through waste-to-energy or MSW composting or in a manner consistent with local solid waste planning. –*ongoing*
- in specific solicitations where environmental conditions apply, work with the OEA to develop appropriate statements indicating that the state encourages corporate environmental responsibility. –*ongoing*

Information about federal recycled content guidelines

is included in the Minnesota

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

Guide, which is available on the

SWMCB's web site: [http://](http://www.swmcb.org/EPPG/default.asp)

www.swmcb.org/EPPG/default.asp.

Recommendations for enhancing current efforts to incorporate environmental criteria into state contracts

The Department of Administration should continue to:

- require buyers to code each purchase order with an environmental code and responding vendors to code the goods and services offered with the state's environmental codes in solicitation documents. *—ongoing*
- promote the use of, and state a preference for, environmentally preferable products. *—ongoing*
- incorporate questions regarding mercury content into its contract solicitation documents. (This information should be used to make specification decisions in future solicitations. To enable buyers to make informed decisions when there are multiple awards, MMD should also include mercury content information on the contract release). *—ongoing*
- require post-consumer recycled paper content to be at least 30 percent in all printed material. *—ongoing*
- announce all contracts that are scheduled to expire within 6 months in order to allow the OEA, other state agencies, CPV members, and the public (vendors, environmental groups, and other interested individuals) to comment on the contracts. *—ongoing*

Recommendations for environmentally preferable purchasing training

The Department of Administration should:

- with assistance from the OEA, increase purchasers' awareness of the availability of environmentally preferable products and services at trade shows and conferences. *—ongoing*
- with assistance from the OEA, update the environmentally responsible purchasing section of the Authority of Local Purchasing training manual that is provided to state employees. *—ongoing*
- work in partnership with the Environmentally Responsible Work Group to educate agency staff to increase purchases of more environmentally preferable products. *—ongoing*

Recommendations for enhancing current efforts for environmentally preferable purchasing training

The Department of Administration should continue to:

- provide training in environmentally preferable purchasing as part of state certification classes and continue to work with the OEA to provide environmentally responsible information through the purchasing training provided to state employees. *—ongoing*
- promote environmentally preferable contracts to state agencies and local units of government, with assistance from the OEA. *—ongoing*
- use Office Supply Connection's e-catalog to help decrease the number of catalogs printed, continue to make the MMD Office Supply Connection newsletters and price lists available online, and continue to use fax broadcast messages and the MMD web site to educate

agencies and Cooperative Purchasing Venture (CPV) members on environmental topics and environmentally preferable state contracts. *—ongoing*

- promote the *Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Guide* (available at www.swmcb.org/EPPG) to state agencies and others with which the Department of Administration has regular contact. *—ongoing*

Recommendations for tracking and evaluation of environmentally preferable purchasing

The Department of Administration should:

- use the valuable information obtained by tracking environmentally preferable purchases to structure future specifications so contracts will have goods and services that are more environmentally preferable. *—ongoing*
- Develop an electronic tracking mechanism for E85 fuel use in state agency fleets. *—NEW*

Recommendations for enhancing tracking and evaluation of environmentally preferable purchasing

The Department of Administration should continue to:

- implement and enhance measures for tracking environmentally preferable purchases, such as requiring buyers to code each purchase order with an environmental code on Minnesota Accounting and Procurement System (MAPS). *—ongoing*
- maintain and keep current the list of environmentally responsible products and services available through state contracts and Office Supply Connection. *—ongoing*

Energy Conservation and Alternative Fuels

Energy efficiency is the least cost method of managing energy costs for government and society as a whole. The smart use of energy entails not just the procurement of energy efficient products but also maximizing their energy saving capabilities by using appropriate settings. For long-lived items, the cost of energy often exceeds the initial purchase price and purchasing agents are key decision makers in this effort.

Minnesota has put significant resources and efforts toward developing the nation's largest E85 (85% ethanol) transportation network—almost 100 stations that can be used by over 100,000 E85 vehicles. E85 uses a Minnesota-made product that is competitively priced and reduces tailpipe emissions. State government manages over 1,000 E85 vehicles and can play an important part in appropriate vehicle procurement and fueling choices.

Recommendations for energy conservation in state-owned and wholly state-leased buildings

The Department of Administration should:

- work with all state agencies to implement energy-efficient government purchasing practices, including working with state hospitals and other facilities with laundry service to adjust their specifications to require Energy Star labeled clothes washing machines for all replacement equipment. *—ongoing*
- incorporate Energy Star specifications into government procurement policies, RFPs and legislation. As part of a comprehensive strategy to reduce energy usage, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy have developed tools, such as a Government Purchasing Tool Kit (<http://www.energystar.gov/>), to streamline government purchase of Energy Star labeled and FEMP recommended products for office buildings, schools, and public housing. *—ongoing*
- assess energy usage in all public buildings for the purpose of establishing energy efficiency benchmarks and energy conservation goals in accordance with Minnesota Session Laws 2001, Chapter 212, Section 3. Benchmarks will identify the best and worst energy performing buildings or building groups, if not separately metered. The benchmarking process will enable the state to prioritize energy conservation activities, so that the poorest performing buildings will be addressed first, resulting in the most cost-effective expenditure of budget dollars. *—ongoing*



Recommendations for alternative fuel vehicles and fuel procurement

The Department of Administration should work with the OEA, the Twin Cities Clean Cities Coalition, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and the Department of Commerce to increase the E85 fuel use in state agency fleets, in accordance with Minnesota Statute 16C.135. Specific action items include:

- vehicle labeling and identification
- developing a fuel tracking system to target education of vehicle users
- developing guidelines for fuel choice, based on relative distance to an E85 fuel site
- offering driver incentive programs
- distributing informational materials
- investigate the development of an online state agency carpool/matching program for conferences, workshops, and events that employees from the same or different agencies might frequently attend.

Conclusion

The recommendations contained in this report are meant to build and improve on the success of the State Resource Recovery Program and to enhance interagency communication and networking, as well as assist the Department of Administration in achieving its resource recovery goals. The OEA and Department of Commerce are looking forward to a continued relationship with the Department of Administration in the areas of waste management, procurement, energy conservation, and alternative fuels.