

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

Resolution in Support of Extended Producer Responsibility Framework Approach

Adopted by NACo, July 15 2008

Issue: Responsibility for discarded products.

Proposed policy: NACo supports an Extended Producer Responsibility Framework Approach, which creates effective producer-lead reduction, reuse and recycling programs, to deal with a product's lifecycle impacts from design through end of life management, without relying solely on state and local governments.

Background: Manufactured goods and packaging constitute approximately 75% of the materials managed by government jurisdictions (US EPA). Consumer products and packaging may contain toxins such as heavy metals, certain plastics, or harmful substances that pose a threat to human health and the environment.

Current federal and state policies often make local government responsible for waste diversion, enforcing product disposal bans, hazardous waste collection, or other costly waste management programs, without providing funding. For example, Minnesota counties currently spend \$13 million annually on household hazardous waste programs. The Extended Producer Responsibility Framework Approach supports a shift in financial and physical responsibility from local government to those benefiting economically from the sale of the products they produce.

An Extended Producer Responsibility Framework Approach is a comprehensive environmental policy that addresses producer responsibility by using a set of criteria to evaluate products, along with established processes, plans, and certifications to provide a consistent approach for a wide scope of products. When producers are responsible for ensuring their products are reused, recycled or otherwise managed responsibly, and when health and environmental costs are included in the product price, there is an incentive to design products that are more durable, easier to repair and recycle, and less toxic.

This comprehensive approach is more efficient than trying to address individual products on a case-by-case basis. It encourages environmentally preferable product design and management to protect human health and the environment in a more effective way. Policies to promote government purchase of environmentally preferable products – a market driven approach – are also an important principle of an Extended Producer Responsibility Framework Approach.

Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact: Passage of legislation for an Extended Producer Responsibility Framework Approach, which creates producer-lead reduction, reuse and recycling programs for their products, will help protect human health and the environment without relying solely on government funding.

Submitted by: Commissioner Victoria A. Reinhardt, Ramsey County, Minnesota