

DATE February 23, 2010

DEPARTMENT

Public Health and Environment

MOTION

SECONDED BY  
COMMISSIONER

Peterson

BY COMMISSIONER Hegberg

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Product Stewardship Framework

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Waste Management Act states that the waste management goal for the State is to foster an integrated waste management system in a manner appropriate to the characteristics of the waste stream and thereby protect the State's land, air, water, and other natural resources and the public health; and

WHEREAS, local government in Minnesota is held responsible by the State for waste management outcomes, including assuring recycling opportunities, regulating and enforcing solid and hazardous waste laws, hazardous waste collection, and other costly waste management programs, without sufficient state funding; and

WHEREAS, since 1980 cities, townships and counties have acted to work toward this goal by implementing a wide variety of publicly funded programs, such as assuring opportunities for all residents to recycle; providing separate management of yard waste, regulating solid, hazardous and infectious waste, providing extensive educational programs and collection facilities for household hazardous waste and other problem materials; and

WHEREAS, even with these efforts, a substantial amount of material, approaching one million tons from the metropolitan area, is placed into landfills each year, resulting in wasted resources and energy; and

WHEREAS, Washington County continues to support solid waste as a renewable resource and solid waste classified as biomass and renewable energy by State law; and

WHEREAS, manufactured goods and packaging constitute approximately 75% of the materials managed as waste based on figures reported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and offer significant opportunities for conserving materials; and

WHEREAS, per capita waste generation in the metropolitan area has remained high over the past decade, at approximately 1.2 tons per person per year and only until the recent economic downturn did waste generation decline as a result of less consumption; and

WHEREAS, consumer products and packaging may contain materials such as heavy metals harmful substances that pose a threat to human health and the environment if improperly managed; and

WHEREAS, local governments do not design or market products and do not profit from their sale, but have spent public resources to deal with and manage the rising volume of discarded products; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota counties spend approximately \$14 million annually on household hazardous waste collection programs; and

WHEREAS, when disposal costs are paid by local governments, producers do not have an incentive to consider end-of-life product management issues; and

WHEREAS, Product Stewardship is an environmental policy through which producers accept responsibility for the management of post-consumer products, so that those who produce and use products bear the costs of recycling and responsible disposal; and

WHEREAS, when producers are responsible for ensuring their products are reused or recycled 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; and

WHEREAS, when end-of-life product management costs are internalized in the price of a product, comprehensive market signals are provided to the consumer so they can make informed decisions; and

WHEREAS, the State of Minnesota and the Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board have led the effort on product stewardship for some products, such as waste electronics, mercury containing items, used motor oil, and lead acid batteries; and

WHEREAS, estimated gross economic activity for Minnesota's recycling manufacturing industry is over \$1 billion, and recycling offers significant local economic development opportunities.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, Washington County urges the Minnesota Legislature to adopt a product stewardship framework approach that creates effective, flexible, producer-led reduction, reuse and recycling programs to deal with a product's lifecycle impacts from design through end-of-life product management so that state and local governments do not have primary responsibility for financing such efforts.

ATTEST:

  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
  
CHAIRMAN, COUNTY BOARD

	YES	NO
HEGBERG	<u>X</u>	___
KRIESEL	<u>X</u>	___
PETERSON	<u>X</u>	___
PULKRABEK	<u>X</u>	___
WEIK	<u>X</u>	___