

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD  
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

STAFF SUMMARY REPORT (Naomi Feger)  
MEETING DATE: January 13, 2010

**ITEM:** 8

**SUBJECT:** **Extended Producer Responsibility** – Presentation by California Product Stewardship Council - Information Item

**DISCUSSION:** Heidi Sanborn, Executive Director of the California Product Stewardship Council, will provide an overview of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), what it is, what it could mean for our Region in terms of reducing waste discharges and improving water quality, and what efforts are underway via the Legislature and nationally/internationally to incorporate EPR policies into commerce.

EPR addresses a product manufacturer's responsibility for that product beyond the time of sale. Manufactured products and associated packaging make up 75% of what consumers throw away, and some products end up as trash in our water bodies. Slowly consumers are awakening to the fact that not only do they pay the costs of the products they purchase, but they also eventually pay for the packaging and the end-of-life disposal of those products. By incorporating the external cost of disposal into the manufacturing of products, manufacturers will have incentives to design products to minimize end-of-life concerns. The major concept in EPR is that manufacturers be responsible for the entire life-cycle of products via policies of take-back, recycling and final disposal. Other EPR ideas include charging consumers deposit-refund fees (California's Bottle Bill), product bans or packaging restrictions (plastic bag bans), procurement preferences, eco-labeling, quotas (recycled-content requirements), design criteria, and other product stewardship initiatives.

Acceptance of EPR approaches is gaining support here in the U.S. and is advanced in practice elsewhere. In British Columbia for example, the Ministry of the Environment has established industry-lead take-back programs, where industry is responsible for collecting and recycling the goods they manufacture. Programs exist for electronics, mercury-containing products, and pharmaceuticals, and other products are under consideration.

The California Product Stewardship Council, a non-profit made up of local governments, business, individual, and organizational partners, is working towards EPR policies in California. Heidi will share some of her recent experiences seeing these policies being put into place elsewhere and report on progress here in California.