

# PRODUCT POLICY INSTITUTE

## Services for Local Government Product Stewardship Councils

Local government Product Stewardship Councils are forming across North America. This is in large part due to the work of **Product Policy Institute (PPI)**. PPI early on recognized the financial plight of local governments burdened with managing toxic and throwaway products, and the unique potential of local governments working together to change how waste management is financed -- and ultimately how products and associated packaging are designed. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), or Product Stewardship, is a policy approach that can reduce both local government costs and the rising tide of waste generation.

PPI was the leading force in starting the California Product Stewardship Council in 2006; has since been the catalyst for the formation of the Vermont, Texas and New York Product Stewardship Councils; and is working in other states to start Councils. This what PPI does. Our major goal is to start Product Stewardship Councils that are local government-driven. PPI's intention, as more councils form and federal legislation is discussed, is to help U.S. councils speak with a unified voice on national issues so that local government's unique interests and needs are articulated effectively.

Our ultimate goal is a vibrant, sustainable economy in which government takes a leadership role through policies that create green jobs and unleash the creativity of businesses to design and provide 'cradle to cradle' management of green products.

Collectively, the PPI team of Board, Staff, Contractors and Key Volunteers bring over 100 years of political, recycling and solid waste management experience to bear on developing and implementing effective EPR policies that benefit communities and the environment while reducing the costs of end-of-life management of products to taxpayers and garbage ratepayers.

Since its founding in 2003, the Product Policy Institute has:

- brought the international term "Extended Producer Responsibility" (EPR) into widespread use in the U.S. and made it synonymous with "Product Stewardship;"
- championed the unique role of empowered local governments in changing how products are designed through how recycling and waste are financed;
- made the comprehensive policy approach known as "EPR Framework" the new policy goal for local and state governments working towards waste management policy reform; and
- been the catalyst for starting Product Stewardship Councils in California, Texas, Vermont and New York.



**Product  
Policy  
Institute**

PO Box 48433  
Athens, GA 30604 USA

+1-706-613-0710

[info@productpolicy.org](mailto:info@productpolicy.org)

[www.productpolicy.org](http://www.productpolicy.org)

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## Building the Foundation

PPI educates, motivates and works with local governments and others interested in forming independent, local, state-based product stewardship councils that promote EPR policies and projects at the local and state level. Below are some fundamental points.

**Framework Principles for Product Stewardship Policy** – Those wanting to work toward forming a council and working with PPI support the *Joint Framework Product Stewardship Principles* developed by the Northwest and California Product Stewardship Councils, harmonized by Product Policy Institute, and subsequently adopted by the Texas, Vermont and British Columbia Product Stewardship Councils, as well as the New York State Association for Solid Waste Management.

**Steering Committee/Board** – PPI believes that the steering committee or board of a Council should be restricted to government entities because a core function of Councils is to provide a forum and voice for local governments to develop and advocate for EPR policies and projects. Local governments need to articulate their unique needs (such as the cost burden of managing toxic and throw-away products and packaging) and develop their own voice in order to work effectively for EPR reform. Councils may want to include advocates in state agencies and EPA but it is important that local governments provide leadership. Likewise, these advocates and others from Non-governmental Organizations and businesses may want to help launch or be part of a new council. This can be quite helpful in starting a council, as long as all accept the Principles and work to empower local governments through the Council. Associate membership structures can accommodate these valued and helpful advocates.

**Regional or Multi-State Councils** – While the Northwest Product Stewardship Council (the first Council, created in 1998) provides an example of a two-state council, PPI recommends that Councils be state-specific for a variety of reasons:

- No matter how similar, every state has different priorities, laws and processes. Ultimately, legislation must be developed and adopted, with specific stakeholder support, independently for each state.
- There are several regional organizations that can help coordinate between states on a variety of subjects, including product stewardship. The purpose of the councils is to keep the focus on EPR at the state and local level.
- Multi-state organizations are often less accessible to local government involvement and participation than single-state based organizations.
- Although we believe in independent state councils for the reasons mentioned above, PPI facilitates regular conference calls among Councils to share information and harmonize policies as much as possible.

## PPI Helps Councils Start, Connect, and Succeed

PPI fosters the inception, growth and development of independent Product Stewardship Councils. The support that PPI can provide includes some or all of the following, depending on need and available funding.

- **Identify Leaders** -- PPI is constantly looking for those individuals who have vision, enthusiasm and dedication for EPR and understand the need for well-organized, coordinated and collaborative efforts to bring it about. PPI has found that finding and supporting a locally accomplished and respected Council coordinator is critical to building and sustaining momentum of new Councils.
- **Develop a Funding and Organizational Strategy** – Your Council efforts will require on-going funding. Options will depend on organizational structure (incorporation, 501c3 status, etc). PPI will work with you to evaluate different organizational structures and to develop a plan for sustainably funding your council. This generally involves working together to seek individual, regional foundation, or state or local governmental funding. As a charitable tax-exempt organization, PPI can solicit and receive funding during the startup phase of the Council.
- **Peer Matching and One-on-One Support** – PPI provides expert technical assistance and strategy development as you proceed in launching your council. We are available for consultation via phone, email and, with funding, in person.
- **Starter Organizational Documents** – PPI will assist you by providing model organizational documents used to start councils (such as strategic plans, bylaws, mission statements, letters of agreement, workplans) adapted from our library of documents and lessons learned from existing councils.
- **Starter Website and Listserv** – PPI creates logos and develops and maintains “starter” websites so that you are able to network and look big quickly. PPI has created and is maintaining startup web sites for the Product Stewardship Councils in Vermont ([www.vtpsc.org](http://www.vtpsc.org)) and Texas ([www.txpsc.org](http://www.txpsc.org)). New York’s site is under development ([dev.nypsc.org](http://dev.nypsc.org)) and California’s site ([www.calpsc.org](http://www.calpsc.org)) was launched and maintained by PPI for a year and a half but is now managed directly by CalPSC. PPI also has managed listservs and continues to find and use new social networking tools to aide in communications. We can introduce you to these tools and assist you in using them.
- **Outreach Materials and Fact Sheets** – PPI has worked with Councils to create, revise, improve and share their materials. We hired professional designers (the PowerPoint trainers for Al Gore’s *Inconvenient Truth*) to develop a narrated PowerPoint and brochure for CalPSC. These materials have been widely used and adapted in other regions and have inspired countless government actors

across the United States to get engaged. We assist Councils with locally adapted outreach materials and fact sheets.

- **Webinars and Workshops** – PPI provides training webinars and workshops to gain additional support for your Council and EPR.
- **Networking with Other Councils** – You are invited to participate in free monthly networking calls with other councils. The focus is on sharing the best ideas between councils and on problems encountered. Framework legislation, product initiatives and special issues are covered.
- **Connect with Local Non-profit and Business EPR Advocates** – PPI has developed strong relationships with a broad network of non-profits, businesses and other EPR advocates. These relationships will be utilized to develop support for your local efforts.

## Other Resources

**Product Stewardship Institute (PSI)** augments PPI's efforts by hosting national dialogues on specific products and by providing valuable educational opportunities, for a fee, to its members. PSI's members include state and local governments, and partners from business and non-industry organizations.

## Contact

**Bill Sheehan**, Executive Director, Product Policy Institute  
PO Box 48433, Athens, GA 30604  
Tel: 706-613-0710 \* Email: [bill@productpolicy.org](mailto:bill@productpolicy.org)

## PPI Team

### **Heidi Sanborn, PPI Outreach Director**

-- California Product Stewardship Council, Executive Director  
-- Independent product stewardship consultant

### **Alicia Culver, PPI Product Stewardship Purchasing Strategist**

-- Green Purchasing Institute, Executive Director

### **Sego Jackson**

-- Northwest Product Stewardship Council, Co-founder and Policy Chair

### **Garth Hickle**

-- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

### **Rob D'Arcy**

-- California Product Stewardship Council, Board Chair  
-- Santa Clara County (CA) HHW Program Manager