EPR: PRODUCT REDESIGN AND REUSE

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October 18, 2012
Product waste has **doubled** since 1960.
Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

EPR laws can foster reuse of products in several ways:

1. EPR laws require brand owners to plan for and pay for the **collection and reuse or recycling** of some portion of the products that they sell.

2. This requirement gives brand owners a financial incentive to **redesign** their products for ease of reuse or recycling.

3. Laws can **prioritize reuse** over recycling.
With EPR legislation for reuse—

1. Consumers either donate a covered product **directly** to a charity or reuse outlet,

   OR

1. Send the product to an **EPR program for reuse** (Such as Paint Care’s program with MetroPaint in Oregon.)
Currently many products are disposable by design.
Two recent studies show that 25% of computers coming out of corporations have been used for less than 3 months.
How are products designed for reuse?
One example is the refillable beverage bottle. The deposit-return system is the classic producer responsibility program.
Sturdy glass **refillables** are designed to be reused dozens of times.
Today the deposit-return system is used worldwide for **engines** and **heavy equipment components** as well as for glass or plastic **bottles**.
Not all design for reuse involves a deposit.

A replaceable maintenance cartridge extends the life of this printer so it can be reused for many years.
Most EPR laws in the U.S. have been passed since 2004.
More product redesign has occurred in Europe and Japan—both have a longer history with EPR than the U.S.

Packaging law in Germany
1991

Appliance law in Japan
2001
Products Redesigned

influenced by EPR laws in Japan and Europe

Several Japanese manufacturers—NEC, Ricoh, and Fujitsu—adopted modular appliance designs to facilitate component re-use.

Milliken Carpet, with offices worldwide, developed carpet squares installed like tiles: squares in low-traffic areas can remain in place when others are taken up for cleaning or reprocessing.

More examples of product redesign for reuse or recycling through EPR: http://www.cleanwateraction.org/files/EPRandProductDesign-10-12.pdf
EPR laws for paint in U.S.

...most paint collected under these laws is combined by color, filtered, and repackaged.

Bills passed:
Rhode Island—2012
Connecticut—2011
California—2010
Oregon—2009
REUSE language in U.S. bills for electronic-waste:

“The total weight of CEDs [covered electronic devices] processed for reuse by the manufacturer, its recyclers, or its refurbishers is doubled.”

---Illinois e-waste law

“Units that are channeled to reuse shall count as double the weight of those recycled toward a given manufacturer’s collection amount.”

---MA bill, passed the Senate
New Standard from UK
To Increase Reuse

WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment)
PAS 141 standard to take affect this fall.

Goals:
- To assure consumers that equipment is safe to reuse.
- To cut down on illegal export to developing countries.
EPR could foster reuse for many product categories—including textiles.

For any product, government-approved plans should require the highest and best use: different plans for different product categories.
Deconstruction

Another frontier for EPR for reuse?

Debris from building demolition and renovation: 25-30% of the waste stream.

Design for deconstruction is a new field with lessons learned
- from product disassembly
- from problems in deconstructing modern buildings.
A poor EPR law at the Federal level now would overturn our good state laws.

We need to build strong grassroots support for EPR in every state.
New Coalition of non-government organizations promoting producer responsibility ...

... is prioritizing product redesign and reuse.
For more information:

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