Cities and groups chime in on feds' procurement planning

Posted on July 21, 2020
by Jared Paben

Paper is one of eight categories within the U.S. EPA's federal procurement guidelines. / Albert Lakanber/Shutterstock

The U.S. EPA asked for public feedback on a list of recycled-content products purchased by federal agencies. The request drew 114 responses from a range of recycling stakeholders.

For the first time in 13 years, the U.S. EPA is going through the process of updating what it calls its Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines (CPGs), which push federal agencies toward buying $1 billion in recycled-content products in eight categories: paper, vehicles, construction, transportation, park and recreation, landscaping, non-paper office and miscellaneous products.

As part of the update, the EPA asked for public comments on the existing lists, seeking feedback on whether products should be added or deleted, recycled-content levels adjusted and more. In addition to the lists, the EPA produces advisory notices to help agencies go about buying specific products in these categories. EPA sought feedback on those advisory notices, too.

A total of 114 comments were submitted before the July 6 deadline. Among the public entities submitting comments were representatives from Alameda County, Calif.; Baltimore County, Md.; Chatham County, N.C.; San Francisco, Calif.; the National Recycling Coalition (NRC); Construction & Demolition Recycling Association; National Recycling Coalition (NRC); Northeast Recycling Council; Recycling Markets Center; and the Washington State Department of Ecology. All of the comments are available online.

A number of commenters noted the federal government's purchasing power through the CPGs also helps state and local governments buy recycled products.

For the past 15 years, the Missouri State Recycling Program has used the federal CPGs to encourage Missouri state agencies to buy recycled-content products, wrote Robert Didriksen, the state recycling coordinator. "For an agency with limited resources the CPG has been an invaluable resource that has greatly facilitated our ability to promote buying recycled through the years," he wrote.

Alameda County, Calif., which includes the cities of Berkeley and Oakland, relies on the CPG standards to buy products as diverse as file folders and plastic signs, wrote Karen Cook, sustainability project manager at the county.

"Without EPA's leadership in setting standards for recycled content, we would not be able to set standards across a broad range of products, because we would not have the time or expertise to engage the marketplace to identify reasonable stretch goals for driving the market forward in their use of recycled content sources," she wrote.

A number of prominent nationwide recycling industry groups also weighed in, including the American Paper & Forest Products Association; National Recycling Coalition (NRC); Construction & Demolition Recycling Association; Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries Inc.; National Recycling Coalition (NRC); Southeast Recycling Council; Western再生管理协会; and the Washington State Department of Ecology. All of the comments are available online.

According to the EPA's request for comments, before finalizing any changes to the CPGs, the agency will issue a public notice and solicit another round of comments.

More stories about regulation/oversight

- Q&A to buy assets from WM and Advanced Disposal
- Q&A: Scenario kit with major permitting panel
- Recycling trade sees clear of mandates shutting businesses

Read more recent stories

- Mixed-waste facility's future uncertain after closure
- Equipment upgrades drive greater UBC recovery
- British Columbia expands EPR and bottle deposit systems
- How a packaging firm ensured its PET canister's recyclability

Subscribe today for weekly updates

In addition to e-newsletters, Resource Recycling Inc. will occasionally send emails related to the specific recycling industry sectors you've selected.

You are encouraged to review our privacy policy.