

Sustainable Practices Plan

Progress Report

Economic and Revenue Forecast Council

Agency Number 104

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Section 1: Policy Statement and Long-Term Goal Focus

Sustainability policy statement: The Economic and Revenue Forecast Council is committed to protect the health and safety of its' employees, reduce the agency's adverse impact on the environment, support local communities and contribute to a healthy Washington economy. The agency is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under Executive Orders 02-03 and 04-01, and will strive to model the principles of sustainability in its operations, and procurement.

Long Range Goals:

- ✿ Develop written procedures to ensure plan objectives are implemented
- ✿ Collaborate with other agencies to host sustainability workshop for interested staff
- ✿ Voluntary pledges from employees that incorporate a response to their concerns and applying them to everyday work life
- ✿ Purchase "energy star" compliant electronics only
- ✿ Encourage efficient use of building resources by providing sustainable alternatives at the facility meetings
- ✿ Require requesting of alternate fuel vehicles when using motor pool or rental cars
- ✿ Require carpooling to all major meetings. As our standard is already high in this area, we should set our goal for 100% compliance by 2010 or earlier.
- ✿ Generally speaking, decrease energy use through efficiency improvements: conserve nonrenewable resources like coal and natural gas; decrease emissions associated with electricity generation; make energy options like solar, wind, or geothermal more viable. Also, increase water efficiency. These are challenging to measure as we are co-located
- ✿ Work with DOR to have facilities concerns addressed from a whole rather than to try to initiate change from one corner of the building
- ✿ Rent or contract for products or services, instead of buying infrequently used equipment
- ✿ Standardize the use of online calendars instead of paper calendars
- ✿ Encourage vendors to work with manufacturers and suppliers to obtain environmental info; make it known that it is important to our agency. With more purchasers asking for this information it will become easier for everyone to obtain

Section 2: Reporting on Objectives

This progress report was an excellent tool to find errors in the initial Sustainability Plan data. Our agency does not have any significant quantitative measures of progress to date. This progress report has identified data recording errors that have now been fixed and will help to identify solid measurements for future use. The agency will monitor collection information on mileage and paper usage to formulate a practical and challenging measure to further engage staff.

Success factors: Our agency has continued to uphold its' standard of minimum paper usage. Our numbers for Fiscal Year 04 are directly in line with those of Fiscal Year 03. This does not suggest that the agency made little or no headway in consumption reduction. The paper type has been changed to the 100% recycled and chlorine free paper as compared to Fiscal Year 02 and 03's use of virgin content. Further, the agency did not reduce the total number for on-hand stock from the Central Stores data in order to keep it reasonably uncomplicated for any staff member who wishes to take over this sustainability coordinator position. (The information from prior years does not reflect number of on-hand supplies.)

Barriers and Challenges: The ballooning mileage figure is the results of careful re-evaluation of previous fiscal years that showed calculation errors were identified, and our attempt to reduce emissions by making the carpooling suggestion. Although the office worked to effectively use carpooling as a means to reduce emissions, we found the burden of driving fell upon our agency in response to this request. We believe that these numbers will reduce as other agencies engage in their sustainability plans more, and are also submitting requests for carpools that their agency might sponsor. The director also had an unusually high number of travel miles due to the Higher Education Coordinating Board meetings and requests from state government leaders to assist with trade missions requiring travel to and from the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

We will work to reduce the travel miles by continuing to carpool, by looking for alternative methods (teleconference) and by keeping our data accurate. In regards to the errors found in data, our agency has adjusted previously reported information for two reasons: they were calculated on a calendar year basis rather than fiscal, and the information supplied was incomplete and further review led to additional travel miles that needed to be reported.

Section 3. Communication and Education

Email has proved to be a friend for the sustainability plan. It is being used successfully to send special notices to all employees about what each person can do – for example, recycling and commute trip reduction strategies. Email has also been used to solicit ideas from staff and to distribute educational materials.

Further, the agency Sustainability Coordinator has posted various resources and brochures for employees to take for their home practices, as well as work practices. We believe this is the next step in pushing public awareness of the sustainability goals of the state. Information can be found on organic gardening practices, way to reduce energy consumption, and even information on native plants. The Coordinator also obtained coupons for all employees for substantial discounts on compact fluorescent bulbs for employees' home use. Discussion of office sustainability practices has also proved to be motivating as three of our five employees have now signed up for "Green Power" through Puget Sound Energy.

A challenge to note in our agency is that we have already accomplished so much that sustainability cannot maintain as high a focus for our group. With thousands of emails coming into the state network, and into our own email accounts, the demand on work time can be overwhelming. The possibility exists that many of the sustainability emails are deleted without being read. Also, because the agency has no dedicated funding for sustainability projects and goals, we rely heavily on employee donations.

Section 4. Statewide Performance Measures

Please review Appendix A for detailed information on paper usage and vehicle miles traveled in personal vehicles. Our organization does not own any fleet vehicles. Our agency is not prepared to establish measures at this time, but will work towards cementing them during our plan revision next year.

Section 5. New or Updated Goals and Objectives

Reviews of our goals and objectives have led us to reconsider or eliminate certain items. For instance, specifically “reducing energy use” has proven to be too challenging to measure as we are co-located with another, much larger, agency. Our agency had mixed success with using refillable pens; some had to be replaced because they were lost, others staff members felt were uncomfortable. Finally, a goal to use preferred purchasing practices has been challenging to meet, even with grids and spreadsheets; it has been too time consuming to really check products for that level of detail. We hope to find a way to streamline this and update our goals with better detail on how to make this time-management friendly.

On a more positive note, our coordinator found another non-profit organization to work with to recycle Ink Jet cartridges. As we cannot purchase from Central Stores our agency’s attempt to find a good recycling initiative was squashed by GA back in 2002 for not being able to obtain enough information on the recycle company. As a small agency we did not have the resources to do an extensive research, so the initiative was dropped. Now we can recycle through the International Association of Administrative Professionals without compromising the agency’s integrity and we help a local group fundraise. Second, our office has managed to eliminate personal printers faster than initially thought, so this goal has been removed. A third goal completed and removed from our list was to put posters up reminding staff to keep lights off when not necessary.

Our agency will add a goal to reduce equipment, supplies, or other products containing toxic chemicals next year. We have already engaged by using green cleaning supplies and other smaller goals that will help us meet EO 04-01. The sustainability coordinator will continue to work on this implementation.

Our agency continues to look for more ways, more goals and objectives, to reduce our footprint. We look forward to revising the plan in its entirety next year.