

RESOLUTION NO. 14804

A RESOLUTION of Thurston County supporting product stewardship systems for rechargeable batteries to provide stable financing, increased recycling, recovery of resources, and reduced environmental and health impacts.

WHEREAS the recycling and disposal of solid and hazardous wastes and the conservation of resources are two of the most challenging and costly issues currently facing local governments; and

WHEREAS the use of rechargeable batteries is increasing with more than 350 million rechargeable batteries purchased annually in the United States, and over the past decade the market share of rechargeable batteries has increased from single digit percentages to the current share of 20%; and

WHEREAS certain rechargeable batteries contain toxic heavy metals such as cadmium and lead that can cause harm to the environment and human health when improperly managed, and the potential health effects of exposure to cadmium and lead include cancer and irreparable reproductive disorders as well as kidney, liver and neurological dysfunctions; and

WHEREAS approximately 400,000 pounds of rechargeable batteries were discarded in Washington State landfills in 2009 and the metals from discarded rechargeable batteries can contribute to the toxicity levels of landfills and incinerator ash; and

WHEREAS only 10-12 percent of consumer rechargeable batteries are recycled; and

WHEREAS recycling rechargeable batteries has numerous benefits, including net reductions in materials consumption and pollutant emissions, and reduced impacts on human health and the environment; and

WHEREAS recycling rechargeable batteries provides a source of secondary raw materials including thousands of tons of metals such as nickel, cobalt and iron that can be used to create new batteries and stainless steel products; and

WHEREAS recycling rechargeable batteries such as Lithium-ion can result in natural resource savings of more than 50 percent; and

WHEREAS product stewardship is a policy approach that shifts financial and physical responsibility for end-of-life management of consumer products from local governments to those who benefit economically from the sale of the products they produce and to those who use the products; and

WHEREAS when producers are responsible for ensuring their products are reused or recycled or disposed of responsibly, also known as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), and when health and environmental costs are included in the product price, there is an incentive to design products that are more durable, easier to repair and recycle, and less toxic; and

WHEREAS industry organizations such as the voluntary rechargeable battery recycling program, Call2Recycle, have partnered with 54 local jurisdictions (city and county governments) and hundreds of retailers to establish nearly 500 active rechargeable battery collection sites around the state that are accessible to the public at no cost; and

WHEREAS in 2011, Call2Recycle paid for the recycling of more than 31,000 pounds of rechargeable batteries collected by local governments in Washington, saving \$25,000 in costs to local governments; and

WHEREAS the stability of manufacturer-financed product stewardship programs is based on the condition that manufacturers of rechargeable batteries and manufacturers of products that contain rechargeable batteries pay into the program; and

WHEREAS legislation is needed to ensure that all manufacturers of rechargeable batteries and manufacturers of products that contain rechargeable batteries participate in and fully fund product stewardship programs; and

WHEREAS rechargeable battery manufacturers support product stewardship legislation requiring manufacturers to finance a stewardship program to collect, recycle or properly dispose of rechargeable batteries;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF THURSTON COUNTY that:

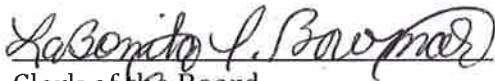
Thurston County supports policies and legislation that establish a convenient, safe, and environmentally sound rechargeable battery stewardship program in Washington State that is financed by the manufacturers of rechargeable batteries and manufacturers of products that contain rechargeable batteries and covers the cost of collection, transportation, and recycling, and does not rely on state and local government funding.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Director of Public Works of Thurston County is authorized to send letters to the State Legislature and State associations, and to use other advocacy methods to urge support for rechargeable battery product stewardship legislation.

ADOPTED: November 13, 2012

ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Thurston County, Washington



Clerk of the Board



Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

JON TUNHEIM
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY


Vice-Chair

By: 
Rick Peters
Deputy Prosecuting Attorney


Commissioner