

NORTH CAROLINA

State Agency Purchases of Recycled Products

July 1, 1999 - June 30, 2000

Sixth Annual Report

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Published by the Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance

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The Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance (DPPEA) provides free, nonregulatory technical assistance and training on methods to eliminate, reduce or recycle wastes before they become pollutants or require disposal. Contact DPPEA for more information about this document or waste reduction.

DPPEA-FY00-21. 250 copies of this public document were printed on recycled paper at a cost of \$60.05, or \$0.24 per copy.

December 2000

Introduction

State agencies are directed to use products containing recycled materials by state law and Gov. Jim Hunt's Executive Order No. 8, signed in 1993 and rewritten in 1999 in support of the governor's environmental sustainability initiative, N.C. Project Green (the rewritten order is No. 156). State agency waste reduction, recycling and buy recycled efforts initiated nearly eight years ago have since become the cornerstone of environmental sustainability in state government.

North Carolina state government continues to make progress toward environmental sustainability through waste reduction and buying recycled products. Fourteen state agencies and 17 universities have worked together to develop plans for a more environmentally sustainable state government. Efforts highlighted in the Year 2000 reports (which can be found at: www.sustainablenc.org) respond to Gov. Hunt's challenge to practice environmental sustainability within state government operations and businesses. This challenge has ignited innovation, education and collaboration within state government. One key component of these plans has been the work of the Division of Purchase and Contract to offer environmentally preferable products to agency purchasers. As one important example, the division removed all virgin copy paper from state contract, which helped lead to a 14 percent increase in recycled content paper purchased in the year 2000.

Another key component of state agency sustainability efforts has been participation in the N.C. WasteWise program. North Carolina initiated WasteWise in 1998 to demonstrate the state's leadership in waste prevention, recycling and buying recycled, and to increase the cost-effectiveness of government operations. Consistent with the program goals, agencies pledged to reduce office paper waste, conduct waste assessments, and purchase only recycled paper and paper products when feasible. In addition, partner agencies are collaborating on projects to facilitate the reuse of surplus state property and to expand recycling opportunities to state offices and facilities located outside Raleigh. North Carolina will complete its first three-year commitment to WasteWise programs and goals in March 2001 and is considering joining forces with N.C. Project Green to add an office-oriented component to the programs.

This document fulfills the reporting mandate of N.C. General Statute 143-58.2(f) for Fiscal Year 2000. It compiles purchasing reports required from 26 state government department and offices, 18 constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina, 58 community colleges, and 117 local public school administrative units. Since the first reports were submitted in 1994, fewer agencies each year have fulfilled their annual obligation to report. However, in Fiscal Year 1999-2000, purchasing reports were received from 86 percent of agencies, which is an increase of 4 percent from the past fiscal year.

The Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance (DPPEA) is the agency charged with compiling data from agency reports and publishing this summary. Copies of this and past reports may be obtained online at <http://www.p2pays.org/>, or by calling (919) 715-6500 or (800) 763-0136.

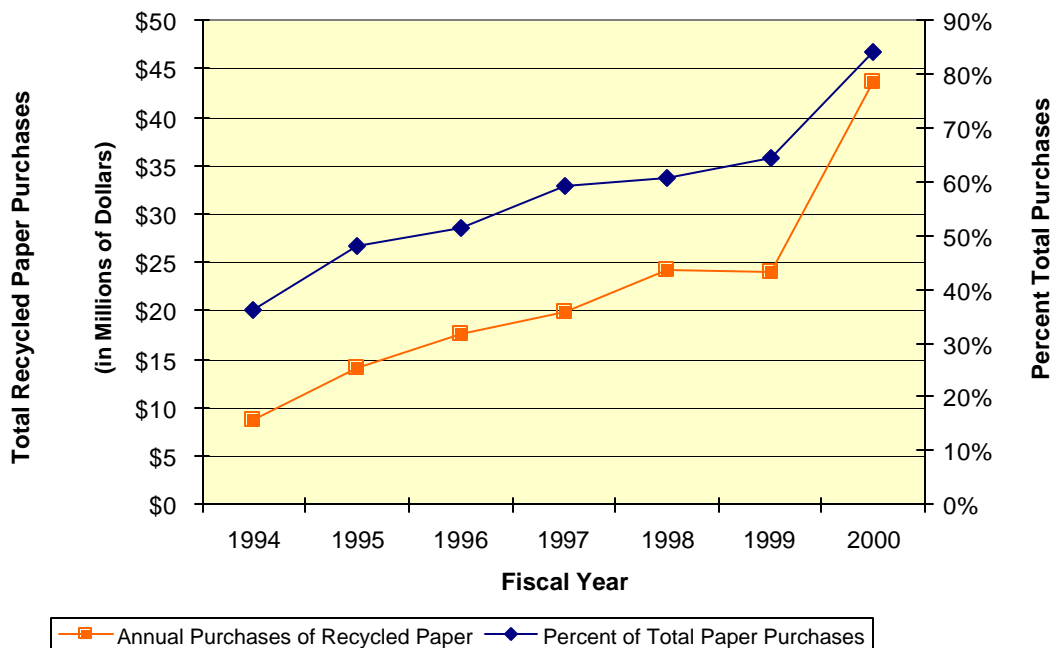
Purchases of Recycled Products

Paper and Paper Products. Agency purchases of recycled paper and paper products in Fiscal Year 2000 totaled \$43,510,743, amounting to 84 percent of all expenditures for paper and paper products. This proportion exceeds the established legislative goal for purchases of recycled paper (50 percent) for the sixth consecutive year. While this percentage falls short of the more stringent goal of 100 percent by 2001 established by Executive Order No. 156,¹ it does in fact show a marked improvement and increases

³ G.S. 143-58.3 established a goal that at least 50 percent of all agency expenditures for paper and paper products be comprised of recycled product purchases. Executive Order No. 8 set a goal for agency expenditures of recycled paper and paper products of 65 percent in Fiscal Year 1998. Executive Order No. 156 reestablished the goal at 100 percent by the Year 2001.

the probability that we will reach this goal during the next fiscal year. Eight agencies succeeded in reaching the 100 percent goal this fiscal year. Figure 1 shows that the percentage of recycled paper and paper products purchased by agencies has increased steadily since Fiscal Year 1994. It also demonstrates the dramatic increase in recycled content paper purchases in 1999-2000 in response to Executive Order 156 and the removal of virgin copy paper from state contract.

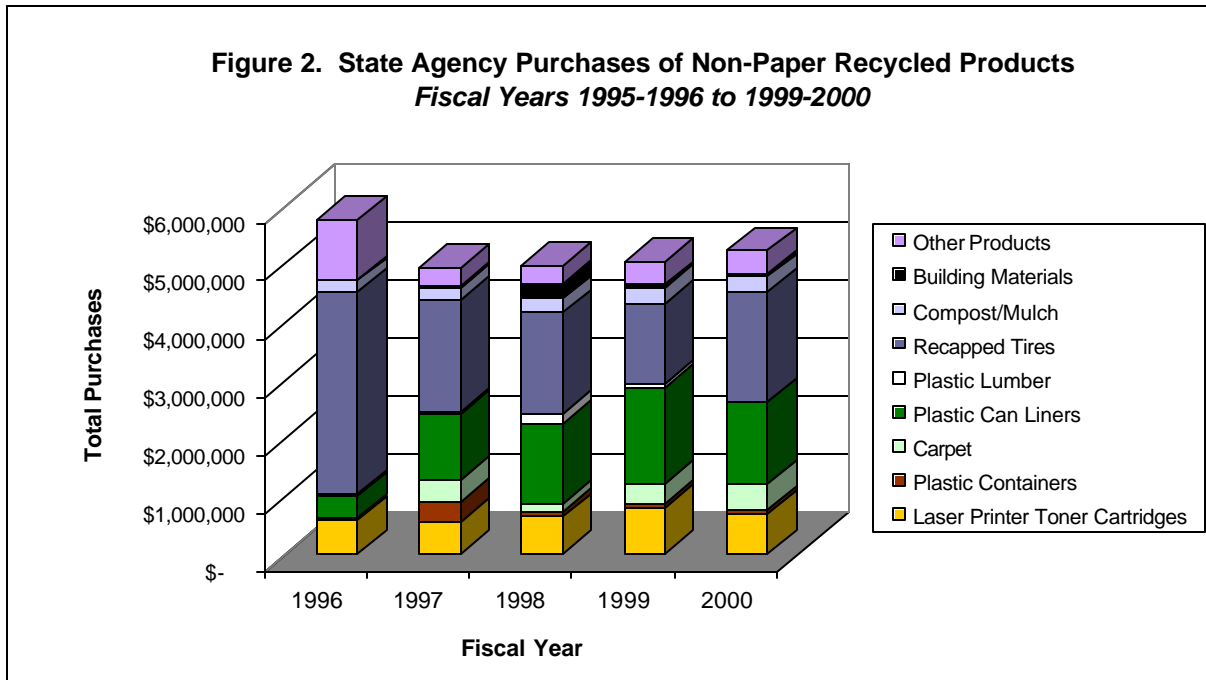
**Figure 1. State Agency Purchases of Recycled Paper and Paper Products
Fiscal Years 1993-1994 to 1999-2000**



UNC-Chapel Hill has set a notable example in seeking to meet the goals of Executive Order 156 by creating a Sustainability Coalition comprised of students, staff and faculty. To effectively address sustainability on the UNC-CH campus, the coalition is broken into eight task groups, one of which is Material Resources and Waste Minimization (MRWM). Among other things, MRWM has focused on increasing the amount of recycled paper purchased by individual departments at UNC-Chapel Hill. They have initiated a program with Staples, Inc. in which purchasers will only be supplied with a recycled content paper. Should they order a virgin brand of paper, they will be sent a paper containing a minimum of 30 percent post-consumer recycled content in its place, along with a memorandum detailing why the change was made. In the initial stages of the program the university's purchasing department has received only positive comments in regards to this change. A full version of the report as well as information on other initiatives is available online at www.sustainablenc.org

Non-Paper Products. Agencies reported spending \$5,160,892 for non-paper recycled products in Fiscal Year 1999-2000, up just two percent from the previous year's expenditures. These products include remanufactured laser toner cartridges, plastic can liners, recapped tires, plastic lumber, compost and mulch, among others. Total agency purchases for recycled non-paper products, illustrated in Figure 2, have remained relatively constant since Fiscal Year 1997. A tremendous increase or decrease in any one

category of material has not been seen. This could be due in part to a lack of focus on these products, both in terms of education and in availability on state contract.



Many agencies, however, continue to be leaders in non-paper recycled content purchasing. The N.C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT) used a variety of recycled products in highway construction and maintenance projects in Fiscal Year 1999-2000. A full description of projects and materials utilized may be obtained in a separate report published by the NCDOT Design Services Unit, (919) 250-4128. The report can be accessed from the department's Web site:

www.doh.dot.state.nc.us/preconstruct/highway/dsn_srvc/value/recycle/taskforce/00report.html

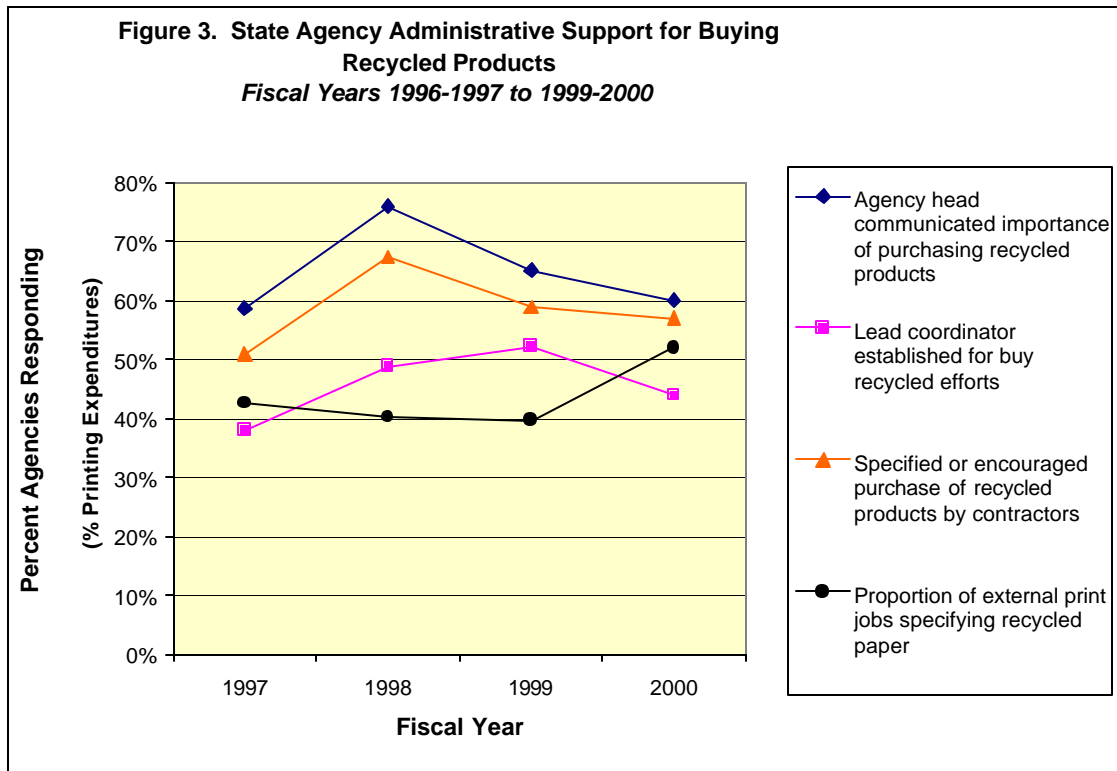
To help spur interest in non-paper recycled products, DPPEA has worked on the following initiatives:

- In collaboration with the Division of Purchase and Contract, a part-time intern has been hired to research and recommend products to be added to state contract. Products currently being added or considered include carpet, uniforms, re-refined oil and antifreeze.
- A buy recycled grant round was initiated in 1999-2000. This grant offers up to \$5,000 towards the purchase of products containing recycled content and requires that grantees implement a buy recycled policy. This grant round was for local agencies only, but will yield data on recycled products that will be useful to state agencies.

Administrative Support and Contract Services. While state agencies continued to make marked improvements in their efforts to buy recycled paper and paper products in fiscal year 2000, many agencies reported lacking support from top management for recycled product procurement. Only sixty percent of responding agencies reported that their chief administrator had communicated the importance of buying recycled products, a decline of 5 percent from Fiscal Year 1999. Slightly less than half reported that their agencies had established a lead coordinator for buying recycled, again a decrease from the previous fiscal year. Figure 3 shows that for the first time in three years the number of agencies that had established a lead coordinator for buy recycled issues has declined. In Fiscal Year 2000, the percentage of agencies

that reported specifying or encouraging the use of recycled materials or products in contracted services decreased to 57 percent from 59 percent the previous year.

The proportion of agency expenditures for external print orders that specified recycled paper, as indicated in Figure 3, rose to 53 percent this year, up 13 percent from Fiscal Year 1999. This shows a marked improvement in outside print orders that have been specifically requested to be printed on recycled content paper. This trend is most likely due to the increase in pressure exerted from Executive Order 156.



Conclusion

State agency performance in waste reduction and buying recycled grew steadily in the first few years that data was collected and reported. In recent years, however, progress has slowed considerably or even reversed in some areas. Agencies as a whole are spending more on recycled-content paper and paper products than they did five or six years ago. Yet, data summarized from Fiscal Year 2000 reports suggest that much variability still exists among agencies in level of commitment, effort and performance.

While many agencies have yet to fully embrace Executive Order 156, several have taken it seriously and are beginning to make a real impact. In purchasing, state agency departments lead the way with 92 percent of procured paper products having recycled content. Public schools and community colleges are next with 85 percent and 84 percent respectively. Universities are at the end of the spectrum, with just 70 percent of their paper purchases having recycled content. This may be in some part due to the fact that many universities have decentralized purchasing, which makes it more difficult to track and mandate.

Fewer agencies are stressing the importance of buying recycled than in the past few years. This does not seem to have affected expenditures for recycled paper which is readily available and for which purchasing goals have been established. But it may affect the procurement of non-paper recycled products.

Recommendations

Upon review and consideration of the data contained in this report, DPPEA submits the following recommendations to improve the solid waste reduction and buy recycled efforts of North Carolina state agencies.

I. Increase Administrative Support and Educational Programs. Disparity among agencies in the degree of support and routine communication received from top management may be the most significant barrier to increased agency participation in recycling and recycled product procurement. Administrative support is crucial also to the successful implementation of agency sustainability plans under N.C. Project Green that incorporate waste reduction, recycling and environmentally preferable procurement. For those agencies that have not yet prioritized waste reduction and buying recycled, it is recommended that they:

- Implement and adhere to the goals of Executive Order 156 which states that **all** paper purchased in Fiscal Year 2000-2001 will have a minimum of 30 percent post-consumer content.
- Issue and enforce internal policies, official memoranda and formal declarations that demonstrate administrative leadership and support for buying recycled and Executive Order 156.
- Develop and implement ongoing outreach and education programs for employees and visitors.
- Join the WasteWise Program and N.C. Project Green, pledging to achieve its goals as part of their overall commitment to environmental sustainability.

II. Increase Procurement of Non-Paper Recycled Products. Although state agencies have increased the percentage of recycled paper and paper products purchased, outright expenditures for non-paper products continue to lag behind. Purchasing a diverse array of recycled-content products not only strengthens recycling markets in North Carolina, it also helps agencies fulfill their obligation to become more environmentally sustainable. Procurement of recycled products will increase only when top management commits itself to establishing policies and specifications that promote these purchases. To improve overall buy recycled efforts, state agencies should:

- Expand the quantity and variety of non-paper recycled products purchased through agency convenience contracts and state term contracts.
- Enforce purchasing rules which mandate buying off of state term contract above in-house delegations.
- Establish or upgrade electronic tracking systems for all recycled product purchases.
- Specify or encourage the use of recycled materials and supplies by contracted services, especially in construction, housekeeping and printing.

III. Make Purchasing Decisions Based On Full Environmental Impact Versus One-Time Cost. In order to determine the full environmental impact of a product or service, it is important to look at the full life cycle analysis of a product. By doing so, state agencies can begin to make purchasing decisions that will be of benefit in both the short and long term.

- Begin looking at products in terms of broad environmental impacts including: durability, energy efficiency, performance, recycled content and recyclability, toxicity, biodegradability, location of manufacturer (local availability) and packaging.
- Develop guidelines and checklists for purchasing and contractual services that take into account environmental impact.
- Reassess accounting procedures so that agencies can receive credit for environmental purchasing.

Appendix A

Respondents for Fiscal Year 1999-2000

Department of Administration	Carteret Community College
Office of Administrative Hearings	Catawba Valley Community College
Administrative Office of the Courts	Central Carolina Community College
Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services	Central Piedmont Community College
Alamance Community College	Chatham County Schools
Alamance-Burlington School	Cleveland Community College
Alexander County Schools	Cleveland County Board of Education
Anson County Schools	College of the Albemarle
Appalachian State University	Columbus County Schools
Ashe County Board of Education	Department of Commerce
Asheboro City Schools	Department of Community Colleges
Asheville City Schools	Office of the State Controller
Asheville-Buncombe Tech College	Department of Correction
Beaufort County Community	Craven Community College
Beaufort County Schools	Craven County Schools
Bladen Community College	Department of Cultural Resources
Blue Ridge Community College	Cumberland County Schools
Brunswick Community College	Currituck County Board of Education
Buncombe County Schools	Dare County Schools
Burke County Public Schools	Davidson County Community College
Camden County Schools	Davidson County Schools
Cape Fear Community College	Davie County Schools
Duplin County Schools	Lexington City Schools
Durham Public Schools	Lincoln County Schools
Durham Technical Community Col.	Macon County Schools
East Carolina University	Madison County Schools
Edgecombe County Schools	Martin Community College
Elkin City Schools	Martin County Board Of Education
Employment Security Commission	Mayland Community College
Fayetteville Technical Community College	McDowell County Schools
Forsyth Technical Community College	McDowell Technical College
Franklin County Schools	Mitchell Community College
Gaston College	Mitchell County Schools
Gaston County Schools	Montgomery Community College
Gates County Public Schools	Montgomery County Schools
General Assembly	Moore County Schools
Office of the Governor	Mount Airy City Schools
Graham County Schools	Nash/Rocky Mount Schools
Granville County Schools	N.C. A&T State University
Greene County Board of Education	N.C. Central University
Guilford County Schools	N.C. School of Science & Math
Guilford Technical Community College	N.C. School of the Arts
Halifax County Schools	N.C. State University
Harnett County Schools	New Hanover County Schools

Haywood Community College
Haywood County Schools
Department of Health and Human Resources
Henderson County Public Schools
Hertford County Schools
Hickory Public Schools
Hoke County Board of Education
Hyde County Board of Education
Isothermal Community College
Jackson County Public Schools
James Sprunt Community College
Johnston Community College
Jones County Schools
Department of Justice
Kannapolis City Schools
Department of Labor
Lee County Schools
Lenoir County Public Schools
Rowan-Cabarrus Community College
Rutherford County Schools
Sampson Community College
Sampson County Schools
Scotland County Schools
Shelby City Schools
Southwestern Community College
Stanly-Albemarle Schools
Surry Community College
Swain County Schools
Transylvania County Schools
Tri-County Community College
UNC-Asheville
UNC-Charlotte
UNC-Wilmington
Union County Public Schools
Vance-Granville Community College
Wayne Community College
Weldon City Schools
Western Carolina University
Western Piedmont Community College
Whiteville City Schools
Wilkes Community College
Wilkes County Schools
Wilson County Schools
Wilson Technical Community College

Newton-Conover City Schools
Onslow County Schools
Pamlico Community College
Pembroke State University
Pender County Schools
Person County Schools
Pitt Community College
Pitt County Schools
Randolph Community College
Randolph County Schools
Department of Revenue
Richmond Community College
Richmond County Schools
Roanoke Rapids City Schools
Roanoke-Chowan Community College
Robeson Community College
Rockingham Community College
Rockingham County Schools
Winston-Salem State University
Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools
Yancey County Schools
Sandhills Community College
Office of the Secretary of State
Southeastern Community College
Stanly Community College
Stokes County Schools
Surry County Schools
Thomasville City Schools
Department of State Treasurer
Tyrrell County Schools
UNC-Chapel Hill
UNC Greensboro
Vance County Schools
Wake County Schools
Wayne County Public Schools

Appendix B

Non-respondents for Fiscal Year 1999-2000:

UNC General Administration	Nash Community College
Alleghany County Board of Education	N.C. Justice Academy
South Piedmont Community College	N.C. Real Estate Commission
Avery County Schools	N.C. Special Care Center
Bertie County Schools	Northampton County Schools
Black Mountain Center	Orange County Schools
Bladen County Schools	Pamlico County Schools
Broughton Hospital	Pasquotank County Schools
Brunswick County Schools	Perquimans County Schools
Cabarrus County Schools	Piedmont Community College
Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute	Polk County Schools
Caldwell County Schools	Department of Public Instruction
Carteret County Schools	Robeson County Public Schools
Caswell Center	Rowan-Salsibury Schools
Caswell County Schools	UNC-Greensboro
Catawba County Schools	UNC Hospitals
Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools	Wake Technical Community College
Cherokee County Schools	Walter B. Jones-ADATC
Cherry Hospital	Warren County Schools
Clay County Board of Education	Watauga County Schools
Clinton City Schools	Yadkin County Schools
Coastal Carolina Community College	Department of Crime Control & Public Safety
DHR-Division of Youth Services	Edenton-Chowan Schools
Edgecombe Community College	Elizabeth City State University
Department of Environment and Natural Resources	Guilford Technical Community College
Department of Insurance	Iredell-Statesville Schools
John Umstead Hospital	Johnston County Schools
Kings Mountain District Schools	Lenoir Community College
Lieutenant Governor's Office	