

2012 DEQ Toxic Reduction Strategy Implementation



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

Purpose

DEQ created a Toxics Reduction Strategy in 2012 to take a more integrated and strategic approach to reducing toxics in Oregon. The strategy is designed to complement and support the agency's existing toxics work, as well as fill any identified gaps.

The 2012 strategy actions were primarily focused on collaborating with partner agencies and organizations to assess and reduce toxics. In addition, most of the strategy actions were intended to reduce toxic pollutants at the source, rather than managing those pollutants after they were generated.

What's in the Toxics Reduction Strategy?

DEQ developed a "Toxics Focus List" to help direct and prioritize the 2012 Toxics Reduction Strategy actions. This list is comprised of 51 chemicals or groups of chemicals, and was assembled by identifying a range of chemicals of concern to multiple DEQ programs.

The 2012 strategy identified 25 actions to reduce and assess toxics in Oregon and DEQ prioritized a few of those for short-term action. Here are some examples of accomplishments:

Develop and implement low toxicity state purchasing and procurement guidelines: DEQ worked with the Oregon Department of Administrative Services to implement a pilot project to purchase low toxicity cleaning products and other janitorial supplies for state agencies. This project represented \$20 million in safer product purchases. Oregon also adopted general "green chemistry" purchasing guidelines that are used as a springboard for on-going efforts to reduce toxic chemicals in office supplies, furniture and other types of products purchased by state and local governments.

Pesticide collection events: Since 2014, over **360,000** pounds of pesticide waste have been collected from close to **600 growers and applicators**, removing significant threats to groundwater and surface water throughout the state. Support for this program was incorporated into the larger Pesticide Stewardship Partnership Program by the 2013 Legislature (see below).

The Pesticide Stewardship Partnership program: This program involves monitoring streams to

identify waters with pesticides that may harm aquatic life and human health. This data is used to inform voluntary strategies for improving practices that reduce pesticides entering waterways. We have seen levels of priority pesticides, such as malathion, **reduced by over 90%** in key watersheds. The 2013 Oregon Legislature provided dedicated funding for this program.

Collaborate to reduce toxics in consumer products: DEQ has been collaborating with multiple groups that bring states, non-profits and business organizations together to identify common priority chemicals in products and promote safer alternatives. These groups increase the knowledge base of members and develop tools to assist with evaluating safer alternatives to priority toxics. For instance, the Interstate Chemicals Clearinghouse developed a comprehensive chemical alternatives assessment guide for businesses and governments.

Integrating technical assistance across programs to advance green chemistry in two industry sectors: DEQ received an EPA grant in 2016 to help reduce toxic chemicals use by Oregon businesses. Funds are used to conduct green chemistry training and chemical alternatives assessments and to support research and safer alternatives assessments for priority chemicals in selected industries. The goal is to use this information to conduct integrated technical assistance to reduce toxics in selected industry sectors and processes.

Ongoing Toxics Reduction Work

DEQ works to reduce toxics in virtually all program areas, encompassing air, land and water. That work continues. Here are just some of the ongoing DEQ toxic reduction efforts:

- Anti-idling campaign
- Mercury controls on cement plants
- Toxics reduction in the Columbia River
- Drinking water protection
- Dry-cleaning program
- E-waste recycling
- Household hazardous waste collection
- Woodstove smoke reduction and outreach program
- Oregon Utility Mercury Rule
- Paint Product Stewardship Program

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- Portland Harbor Cleanup and Source Control

Looking Forward

Updating the strategy provides an opportunity to look holistically at issues impacting our air, land and water and identify actions to improve conditions for our environment and communities. The updated strategy will set measurable goals and create a framework of accountability for this important work.

Alternative formats

DEQ can provide documents in an alternate format or in a language other than English upon request. Call DEQ at 800-452-4011 or email deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.