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*NEWS RELEASE*

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*Department of General Services - Ron Joseph, Director*

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**CALIFORNIA STATE GOVERNMENT TAKES THE LEAD,  
REDUCING THE FLOW OF OLD CARPETS INTO LANDFILLS**

**SACRAMENTO, CA** -- It's probably one of the last things the average Californian thinks about when they ponder the need for recycling and protecting the environment. They'll probably be surprised to learn that almost a million tons of it end up in California landfills every year (about 840,000 tons) -- roughly two percent of California's waste stream.

We're talking about old carpets.

On September 1st, California state government will start doing something about it. After that date, all new and most replacement carpeting purchased for use in the thousands of state buildings must contain at least 10 percent recycled materials. The recycled portion can come from old carpets or from other materials that would normally be headed for landfills.

The new California Gold Sustainable Carpet Standard was established by a special interagency task force charged with implementing portions of the state's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) law. In addition to recycling requirements, the new standard also calls for compliance with strict California guidelines for protecting the health of building occupants by reducing the amount of volatile organic compounds that escape into the indoor air from new carpeting.

"This new state initiative is an excellent beginning in a long-neglected area of recycling," said Ron Joseph, Director of the California Department of General Services. "California is leading the way with new standards to reduce the waste stream and ensure healthier working conditions."

Every year, the state purchases an estimated 12 million square feet of new carpeting - enough to carpet 47 miles of four-lane freeway or 208 football fields. Meantime, every year an estimated 5.3 million square feet of worn-out carpeting is hauled away from state buildings (21 miles of four-lane freeway or 92 football fields). "That's a huge amount of carpeting, so these changes represent a major step toward a greener California," said Joseph.

The new initiative is the latest step in implementing Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's December 2004 executive order that launched his Green Building Initiative.

Earlier this year, in March, California slashed by roughly two-thirds the amount of toxic mercury in replacement fluorescent lamps going into state office buildings. New state purchasing contracts

require that state agencies must only purchase low-mercury fluorescent tubes when replacing burned out lamps. Every year, the state replaces 175,000 of the standard, four-foot, thin-line fluorescent tubes in thousands of state buildings, so the change will have a significant effect on the amount of mercury escaping into the California environment.

The governor's Green Building Initiative executive order directed that all state buildings constructed or renovated after December 2004 should meet the U.S. Green Building Council's "LEED Silver" certification or better. (LEED stands for "Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design.") Buildings get LEED points for using low-mercury lamps and carpets with low emissions and recycled content.

"With this new initiative, we're hoping to leverage the state's huge purchasing power to encourage competition among manufacturers to develop even better recycling techniques," said Joseph. "We want to encourage industry to think sustainability and a healthy environment.. We're also hoping that local governments, the business community and private citizens will join the Governor's push for a Green California by adopting the same standards.

"We believe one of the biggest contributions state government can make to a green California is to lead by example - by acting as a role model in protecting the environment," said Joseph.

Detailed information on the new California Gold Sustainable Carpet Standard can be found at [www.green.ca.gov/EPP/standards](http://www.green.ca.gov/EPP/standards). Information on the low-mercury fluorescent standards was formerly available at <http://www.pd.dgs.ca.gov/contracts/cal-lamps.htm>