

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
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OCTOBER 14, 2008

REMANUFACTURED TONER CARTRIDGES

On January 16, 2007, this Board adopted a comprehensive energy and environmental policy. Consistent with this policy, the Internal Services Department, as the County’s Purchasing Agent, implemented a countywide policy on the purchasing of environmentally preferable products.

Although the full transition to “green” products is scheduled to be phased in over a five year period, there are existing products that County departments may purchase now with limited or no impact on County operations. One such product is remanufactured toner cartridges for printers.

To date, the Internal Services Department has established the infrastructure to accommodate and facilitate County Department purchasing requirements by soliciting bids and establishing fifteen separate agreements with suppliers that provide remanufactured toner cartridges.

Using remanufactured toner cartridges has significant economic and environmental advantages:

- Remanufactured cartridges save money. Based on the County’s agreement pricing, recycled cartridges range from 20% to 40% less expensive than new ones.
- Remanufactured cartridges save energy. According to recent studies, approximately three quarts of oil are burned in the production of a single new toner cartridge. A used cartridge can be remanufactured up to four times, depending on the type and condition, saving up to three quarts of fuel each time.

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- Remanufacturing cartridges decreases the amount of plastic, steel, aluminum and rubber sent to landfills and burned in incinerators. Reports suggest that cartridge remanufacturing reduces municipal solid waste by almost 38,000 tons each year.

Despite these benefits, concerns have been raised about the quality and reliability of remanufactured cartridges when compared with new toner cartridges. There have been comparison studies conducted by various interested parties with conflicting results.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Director of the Internal Services Department (ISD) to report back within 60 days on:

1. the quality and reliability of remanufactured toner cartridges, as compared with new ones; and
2. the experience of other governmental jurisdictions that have adopted policies on the use of remanufactured cartridges; and
3. the feasibility of implementing a pilot program requiring county agencies to purchase remanufactured toner cartridges unless there is a compelling reason not to.

WE FURTHER MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Director of the Internal Services Department (ISD) to work with County Counsel to research the legal and contractual issues associated with the use of remanufactured cartridges, and report their findings to the Board within 60 days.

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