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Today's News:

CALIFORNIA GREEN CHEMICALS crusade will rely heavily on communications, IT technology, says senior state official. Businesses invited onto official rule-drafting wiki. (P. 1)

FINAL ENERGY STAR SPEC for displays under 30 inches released. Spec covering all sizes due March 30. (P. 2)

ENERGY EFFICIENCY: Smart grid provisions in stimulus bill will help cut carbon emissions, says Greenpeace report. (P. 2)

E-WASTE: Encompass launches program to harvest circuit boards. (P. 3)

COMPANIES: Rackable launches Eco-Partner program. (P. 3)

Preempting Ban Bills

California Looks to Tech to Empower Market on Green Chemistry

SAN JOSE, Calif.-- The use of digital technologies is central to carrying out California's sweeping state Green Chemistry Initiative, the director of the Department of Toxic Substances Control told an electronics-industry audience. The department's director, Maureen Gorsen, invited attendees Wednesday at a compliance conference to join in helping draft, through an official wiki, regulations under the first two pieces of legislation carrying out Green Chemistry recommendations. The conference was organized by IPC, a printed-circuits industry association.

"Come online and be a reg writer," Gorsen said. "You can delete other people's language you don't like." But "we keep a history of everything" written and changed on the wiki, she added. The department also is looking eventually for product-ingredient disclosures to be embedded in bar codes for customers to read by bar code with cellphones, instead of on printed labels, Gorsen said. A bill to require disclosure died in the Legislature last year, she said, but she expects it to come back.

Gorsen stated a strong preference for simple, numerical materials-safety ratings for products, akin to *Wine Spectator's* one to 100 quality scale. They would require sophisticated algorithms to take into account vast amounts of data along many dimensions, she said. Customers might be able to adjust product ratings by choosing their own environmental priorities to emphasize, Gorsen said. "It's a market-based model where consumers make the choices."

Answering a question about communications and IT hardware, Gorsen said the department hasn't started looking at specific industries. But her presentation highlighted the large number of cellphones junked. "They get you to throw that thing out every two years," Gorsen said, saying she's one of those who turn over handsets often.

The wiki -- cagreenchem.wikidot.com/ -- is a start toward regulations carrying out AB-1879 and SB-509, enacted last year to carry out two of the six recommendations in a state green-chemistry report, the department said. The laws require manufacturers to seek safer alternatives to the materials they use, and the state to create "a Facebook for chemicals," making "very accessible" comprehensive information on each substance, including data worked up by Canada, the EU and Japan, Gorsen said.

The wiki is being used to create draft rules that answer what kind and level of health concern will trigger the “alternatives analysis” required by law, what it means to do development for a product’s full life cycle, what the consequences will be of using chemicals considered unnecessarily harmful, and how the rules will be enforced, Gorsen said.

One of two passages including “electronic” on the wiki Thursday morning said: “[T]o encourage proper recycling of discarded consumer products containing hazardous materials like electronics, sales of these items should be taxed much like some containers are taxed at sale today, and these funds can be used to pay those who deliver the items to the proper recycling facilities (redemption value), and also to pay for the recycling process”

The other said: “Products to be applied or ingested, directly or indirectly, might be released into the environment in a form that is potentially a greater problem than something like an electronic product. An electronic product has mainly potential occupational risks that are regulated and can be controlled during manufacturing and recycling.”

The wiki could use wider participation, Gorsen conceded, saying it had attracted barely 50 contributors. It started Dec. 22 and was the subject of a little-noticed news release Jan. 26. Of 80 revisions made by Thursday morning, almost half, including the last 25, were credited to one anonymous participant. — *Louis Trager*

Effective Oct. 30

Final Energy Star Spec for Displays Under 30 Inches Released

The Environmental Protection Agency released the final Energy Star specification for displays under 30 inches, including minimal changes from the last draft version. The agency said it would come out with its final standard for all display sizes March 30. Once that version is out, it will replace the specification for displays under 30 inches. The specification will take effect Oct. 30, it said.

The final version 5.0 specification for displays under 30 inches sets on-mode requirements based on screen size and resolution. But devices that are shipped with automatic brightness control that can be activated “by default” will be rewarded with an “alternative” way to calculate maximum “on-mode” energy use, it said. The agency understands the “benefits” of offering consumers “full-featured” products, it said, but higher brightness settings have the effect of nullifying the energy use reductions attained through improved component efficiency.

The specification contains two levels of sleep and off mode requirements for all display sizes. The sleep and off mode limits for tier 1 are 2 W and 1 W, respectively, for displays less than 30 inches, and 4 W and 2 W for bigger screen sizes. For the second tier, the specification sets the maximum power sleep and off mode power limits at 1 W. The agency will work with manufacturers of “professional” displays to set a new “on mode” power use requirement, it said, “assuming the inclusion of professional displays will be feasible.” A online conference will be held Feb. 18 to discuss an on mode requirement for professional displays, it said. -- *Dinesh Kumar*

Energy Efficiency

The energy efficiency and conservation provisions alone in the economic stimulus package being considered by Congress could help cut carbon emissions by 61 million metric tons annually, a Greenpeace report said. That, Greenpeace said, is equivalent to greenhouse gas emissions stemming from electricity use in 7.9 million homes. The \$11 billion for smart-grid research and projects has the potential to “better connect technology that will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions,” it said. Among other allocations that would help cut energy use, the report said, are \$6.9 billion in local government energy efficiency grants, \$2 billion for energy efficiency and renewable energy research and \$300 million for smart appliances rebates.

The Alliance to Save Energy applauded the Energy Efficiency Resource Standard bill introduced by Rep. Ed Markey, D-Mass., as an “effective federal policy” that would reduce consumers’ energy use, cut costs and greenhouse gas emissions. The bill would require utilities to reduce electricity demand 15 percent by 2020. They could count savings from appliance standards and other efficiency programs. “A national Energy Efficiency Re-

source Standard is a critical building block not only for U.S. energy policy but also for U.S. environmental and security policy,” said alliance President Kateri Callahan.

The Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance launched a competition for cities and counties to cut energy use. Localities can compete for up to \$500,000 to create and operate efficiency programs, including promoting use of technologies in homes, businesses and schools, it said. The competition is open to cities in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

E-Waste

Encompass Group launched its Green Choice Parts program, which is specifically designed for harvesting and re-using electronic printed circuit boards and assuring they're used in consumer electronics products instead of ending up in landfills, Encompass said. The Green Choice Part program markets re-certified parts harvested from broken and damaged large screen flat panel televisions, the company said. All parts are tested and certified, and come with a 90-day warranty, but cost less than conventional replacement parts, Encompass said.

Federal Actions

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi named Karen Wayland as her new policy advisor on energy issues. Wayland is legislative director for the Natural Resources Defense Council and is an adjunct professor at Georgetown University.

Companies

Rackable Systems said it launched its Eco-Partner program to offer its partners expanded access to the company's Eco-Logical data center programs. The program gives global partners enhanced access to Eco-Logical data center technologies, marketing funds, discounts, qualified lead generation, streamlined communications and training. Partners will also get access to Rackable's technical guidance on data center trends such as cloud computing, data center mobility and energy efficiency, Rackable said.



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