Waste Management System in the U.S.

Product

- Consumer buys product
- Product delivered to store or sold online
- Product is manufactured

Consumer disposes or recycles product

Funded by garbage rates

Waste

- Local governments responsible for recycling or disposal of product

- Government and ratepayers pay for recycling/disposal.
- No incentive for manufacturers to design less toxic, more recyclable products.

Images from the Story of Stuff with Annie Leonard
What is Product Stewardship?

The act of minimizing health, safety, environmental and social impacts, and maximizing economic benefits of a product and its packaging throughout all lifecycle stages.
Product Stewardship

Product

- Consumer purchases product
- Product is manufactured and sold to retailers
- Cost of program is funded by producers
- Producers want lower costs:
  - Materials are recycled to be used in new products.
  - Products are designed to be less toxic, easier and less expensive to recycle.

Waste

- Consumer takes product to local store or drop-off location to be recycled
- Stewardship Organization manages the program on behalf of producers
- Stewardship Organization contracts with local recyclers for service
- Big Box Mart
- TVs R Us
Product Stewardship

- The **producer** of the product has the greatest ability to minimize adverse impacts, but other stakeholders, such as suppliers, retailers, and consumers, also play a role.

- Stewardship can be either **voluntary** (PS) or **required by law** (EPR).
What is Product Stewardship?

Product Stewardship includes:
- Product development
- Raw materials
- Production
- Packaging
- Storage and distribution
- Marketing and sales
- Use
- End of product life cycle
What is Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

EPR is a mandatory type of product stewardship that includes, at a minimum, the requirement that the producer’s responsibility for their product extends to post-consumer management of that product and its packaging.

Two features of EPR policy:

1. Shifting financial and management responsibility, with government oversight, upstream to the producer and away from the public sector

2. Providing incentives to producers to incorporate environmental considerations into the design of their products and packaging.