

Sustainable Purchasing and Ecolabel Use in U.S. Local Governments




Center for Organization
Research and Design
Arizona State University


Sustainable Purchasing
Research Initiative




About Me


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Visiting
Scholar







Two Parts...

1. Results of a U.S. study on cities' SPPs
2. Results of international study on ecolabel design

SPP: Sustainable Purchasing Policy






Sustainable Purchasing at U.S. Federal and State Levels

- Federal level
 - Executive orders (3)
 - Sustainability = criteria within federal agencies' purchasing
 - Clinton administration
 - “Greening the Government Through Waste Prevention, Recycling and Federal Acquisition”
 - Obama administration - expansion
 - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
 - Stimulate demand for sustainable products
 - No enforcement mechanism
 - Policy likely to change under Trump administration
- State Level – some states endorse it – California







1. Do U.S. cities that adopt a SPP differ from nonadopters?

2. What factors are associated with SPP implementation success?

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U.S. Project Scope

- Sample of 791 U.S. cities of $\geq 25,000$ residents
 - o Representative based on location, size and income
- Surveyed department directors
 - o Environment, finance and public works
- Focused specifically on environment
- Data collection completed April 2017
 - o 58.0% cities (459)
 - o 33.8% individuals (616)

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Project Faculty
Nicole Danall, Justin Stritch, Stuart Bretschneider, Lily Hsueh

Research Institute for Environmental Economics and Management

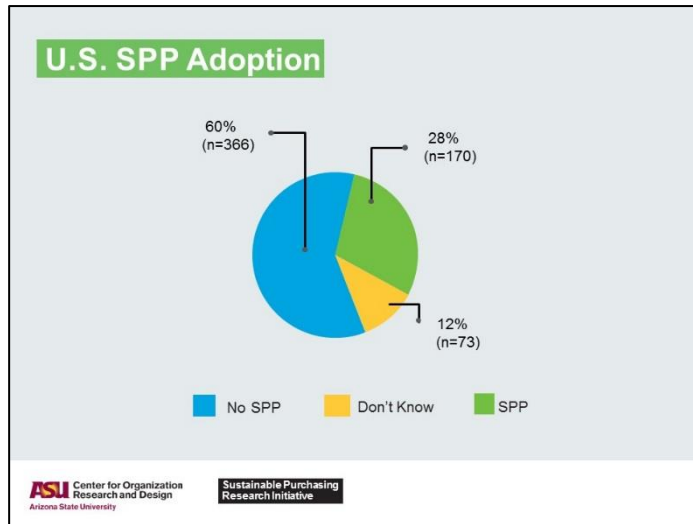
Japan Project Scope

- All 860 Japanese municipalities of $\geq 25,000$ residents
- Surveying department directors
 - o Environment, finance and public works
- Focusing specifically on environment
- Data collection will be completed January 2018
 - o > 83.0% municipalities (714)
 - o > 50.0% individuals (430)
- Return November 2018 – January 2019

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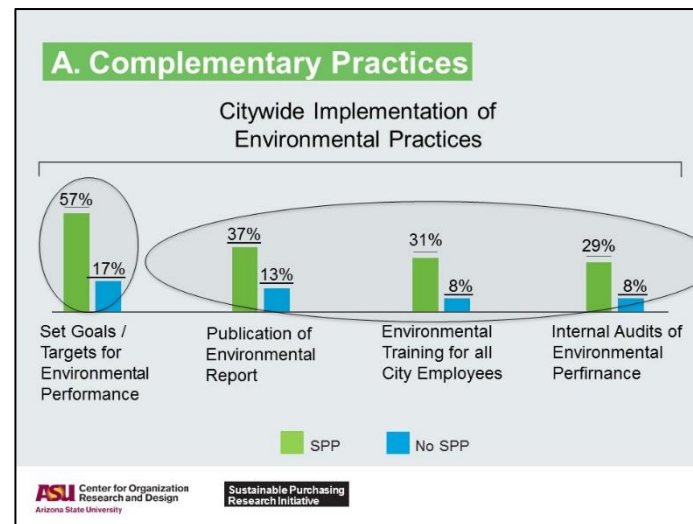
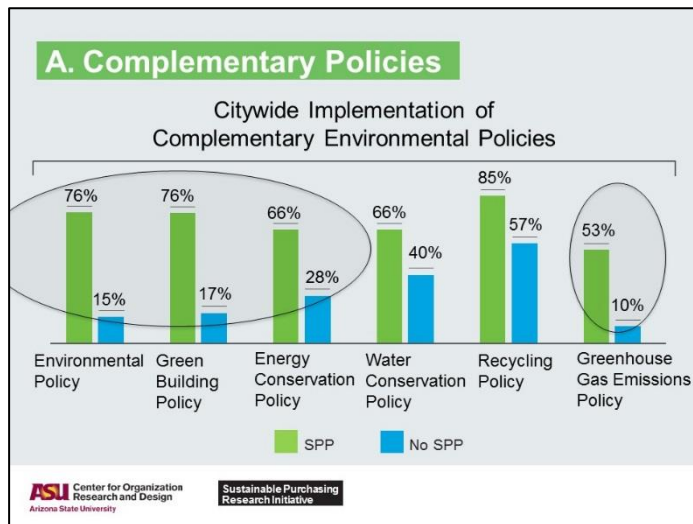
Project Faculty
Nicole Danal, Toshi Arimura, Takuro Miyamoto



1. Do U.S. cities that adopt a SPP differ from nonadopters?

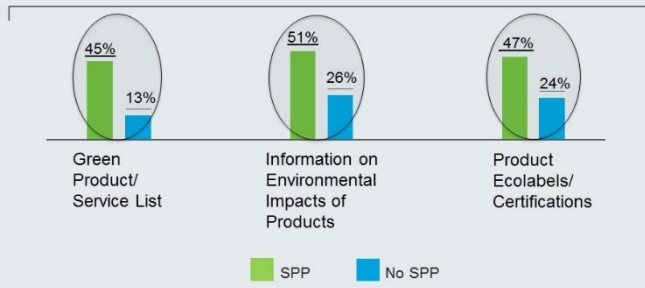
- A. Citywide complementary policies and practices
- B. Information access
- C. Leadership and resources
- D. Vendor roles

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B. Information Access

Information Sources Available to Departments When Making Purchasing Decisions

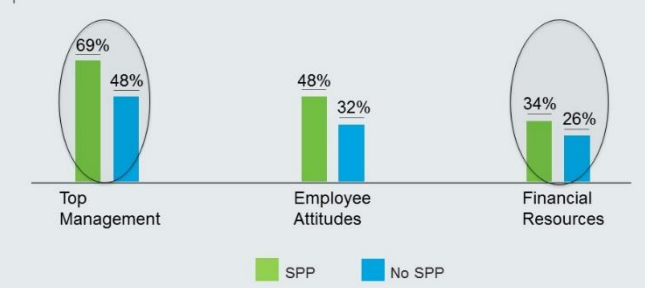


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C. Leadership

Facilitators of Departments' Ability to Implement Sustainable Purchasing

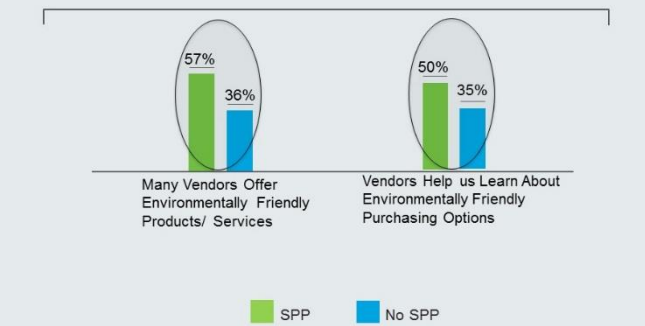


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D. Vendors

Vendor Roles



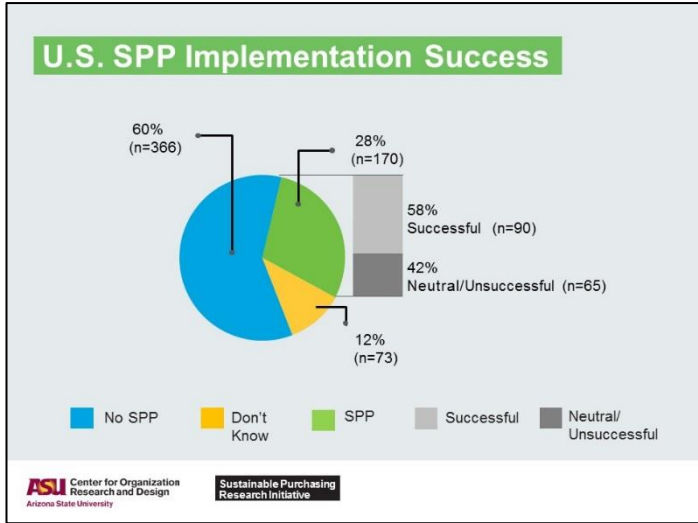
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But adopting a SPP does not mean that it will be successful at reducing environmental impacts...

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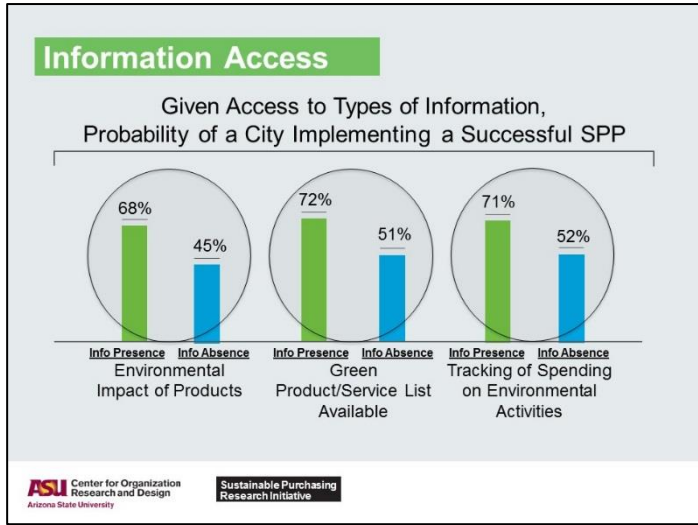
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2. What Factors Are Associated With U.S. Cities' Sustainable Purchasing Success?

- A. Citywide complementary policies and practices
- B. Information access
- C. Leadership and resources
- D. Collaborative relationships with vendors
- E. Innovation culture

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Recommendations for Cities to Increase SPP Adoption and Implementation Success

Our 8 Recommendations

1. Build on complementary policies and practices
2. **Use information about environmentally preferred products**
3. Utilize e-procurement systems that integrate environmental product information
4. Track spending related to sustainable purchases
5. Enhance collaborative vendor relationships
6. Assign accountability to top-level management
7. Foster a culture for innovation
8. Participate in professional networks to share best practices

U.S. Federal Position

- No federal regulation of ecolabels
- Federal Trade Commission regulates deceptive advertising claims
 - False "green" advertising considered #1 area for consumer deception
 - Limited prosecutions
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency offers some guidance
 - *Guidelines for Environmental Performance Standards and Ecolabels*
 - Only considered a limited number of ecolabels

Ecolabels

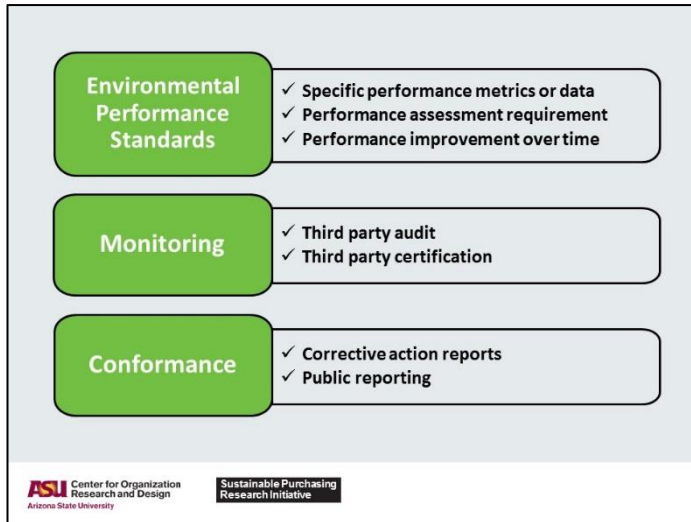
- 1990 = ~ 1 dozen
- 2017 = ~ 465
- Different sponsors
 - Government
 - Industry Associations
 - Independent Organizations
 - Standards setting organizations
 - Environmental NGOs



PART TWO: Ecolabel design

(Darnall, Ji & Potoski, *Regulation & Governance*, forthcoming)

- Are some ecolabels more credible than others?
 - Is sponsorship a reliable information cue (signal) about the rule structures of ecolabels?
 - International study



Data

- **Ecolabel Index** (www.ecolabelindex.com)
 - Largest directory of global ecolabels
 - 2015 - contained program design information for 436 ecolabels
- **Limited sample to ecolabels...**
 - OECD countries
 - Still functioning in 2015
 - Online contact information

→ 352 ecolabels

- **Only 1/4 had complete data**
 - 265 incomplete

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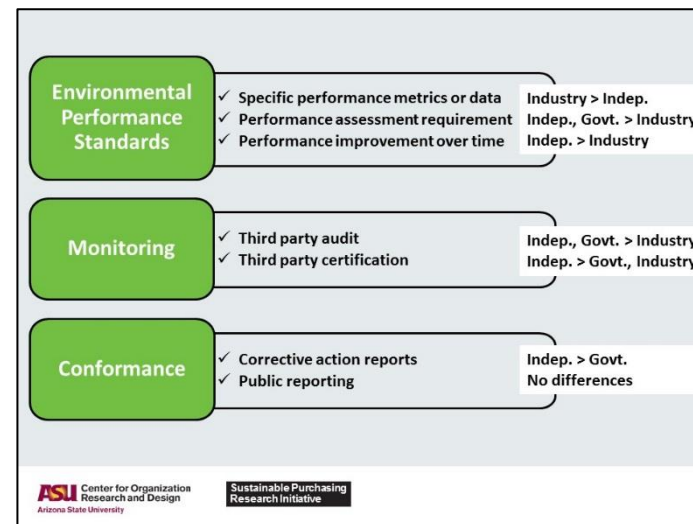
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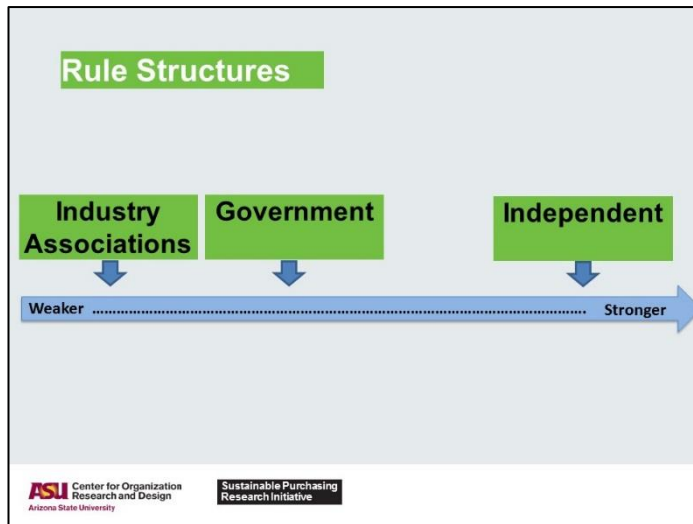
Data

- **For ecolabels with incomplete information...**
 - Survey program managers about ecolabel rules
 - 10 questions
 - Environmental standards
 - Monitoring requirements
 - Conformance requirements
 - 102 responses (38% response rate)
- **Combined data for 189 ecolabels**
 - Complete data for 54% of ecolabels

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Governments need information access for SPPs to be successful

Ecolabels can assist

Sponsorship = important information cue
 → *Independent ecolabels are more robust*

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Additional Information & Articles

- U.S. cities' SPP adoption
- Updates on Japan SPP study
- Ecolabel studies

spa.asu.edu/SPRI

Questions?

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Ecolabel Rules/Design Features	Ecolabel Sponsor:			Statistical Differences between:		
	Govt (n=31)	Indep (n=117)	Industry (n=41)	Govt/Indep	Govt/Industry	Indep/Industry
Environmental Requirement						
Specific metrics or performance data required	90%	79%	93%	–	–	*
Conducts assessments of environmental/social impacts	71%	70%	46%	–	**	***
Requires environmental/social performance improvements over time	61%	62%	44%	–	–	**
Monitoring Requirement						
Third party audit required	68%	64%	49%	–	*	**
Third party certification required	55%	68%	54%	**	–	***
Conformance Requirement						
Corrective action reports required	65%	80%	68%	*	–	–
Assessment/audit reports publicly	36%	38%	24%	–	–	–

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