

**SUNY COLLEGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND FORESTRY  
ADMINISTRATION POLICY LIBRARY**

**Green Purchasing and Break Free From Plastic Policy**

Responsible Executive:	Mark Lichtenstein
Responsible Office:	Business Office/Purchasing Department
Issued:	November 2021
Latest Review / Revision:	November 2021



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## POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to all consumable and durable products and electronics purchased by SUNY ESF. This policy has been reviewed and approved by the responsible executive. It is the responsibility of all purchasers at the College to abide by this policy, to the greatest extent practicable. This policy outlines environmentally preferred sustainability criteria for commonly purchased consumable items and electronics.

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## REASON FOR POLICY

The materials, supplies, equipment, and furniture used in a building all impact indoor air quality, and thus contribute to the overall health of building occupants. The products that are purchased, consumed and removed from campus also contribute to climate change. The environmental impact of consumable products can be reduced by purchasing materials that have been salvaged, contain recycled content, are durable (rather than designed for single or short-term use), are rapidly renewable, contain certified wood, or are manufactured locally.

SUNY ESF has committed to reducing the environmental impact of the materials and supplies it uses on campus through adopting the Post Landfill Action Network's (PLAN) [Break Free From Plastic Pledge](#), setting zero waste goals and now through establishing specific sustainable purchasing criteria, building upon [New York State's EO 4 Approved Purchasing Specifications](#). This policy clarifies product selection and purchasing criteria needed to meet the requirements for the aforementioned Pledge, NYS's Executive Order 4 Approved Purchasing Specifications and [LEED v4.1 O+M MR Prerequisite Purchasing Policy](#) certification/recertification.

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## SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to:

- |                   |                                       |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ✓ President       | ✓ Deans, Directors & Department Heads |
| ✓ Vice Presidents | ✓ Area Managers & Supervisors         |

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✓ Faculty  
✓ Staff

✓ Students  
Others \_\_\_\_\_

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## WEB SITE REFERENCES

This policy:

Policy Office: <https://www.esf.edu/physicalplant/> ; <https://www.esf.edu/sustainability/>

Vice President for Administration: <http://www.esf.edu/administration/>

Procurement Office: <https://www.esf.edu/business/purchasing/>

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## RELATED INFORMATION

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Part 516 – Records to be Kept by Employers	<a href="http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=dc8bc2797d8cf7f1e268b96a506c1854&amp;mc=true&amp;node=pt29.3.516&amp;rgn=div5">http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=dc8bc2797d8cf7f1e268b96a506c1854&amp;mc=true&amp;node=pt29.3.516&amp;rgn=div5</a>
NY State Executive Order #4:	<a href="https://ogs.ny.gov/greenny-purchasing-requirements-and-tools">https://ogs.ny.gov/greenny-purchasing-requirements-and-tools</a>
SUNY Construction Fund Directives	<a href="https://sucf.suny.edu/resources/program-directives">https://sucf.suny.edu/resources/program-directives</a>

## CONTACTS

Specific questions should be directed to the following:

Subject	Contact	Telephone	Office or Department E-Mail / Web Address
Policy Clarification and General Information	Chief Financial Officer and VP of Administration	(315) 470-6622	<a href="mailto:policies@esf.edu">policies@esf.edu</a> <a href="http://www.esf.edu/au/pp.htm">http://www.esf.edu/au/pp.htm</a>
Policy Development	Sustainability Division and Facilities Operations	315-470-6588	<a href="mailto:sustainability@esf.edu">sustainability@esf.edu</a> <a href="https://www.esf.edu/sustainability/">https://www.esf.edu/sustainability/</a>

## DEFINITIONS

<b>Purchasing Criteria</b>	Includes: Ongoing consumables and electronic equipment purchases.
<b>LEED</b>	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
<b>USGBC</b>	United States Green Building Council

## POLICY DETAILS

### Green Purchasing and Break Free From Plastic Policy

Effective Date: November 2021

#### Scope

This policy applies to consumable and durable commodities and electronic equipment purchased at SUNY ESF. This policy and its Appendix will be consulted by purchasers prior to placing orders for commodities and electronics.

The College shall strive to meet the following targets:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Goal</u>	<u>Performance measurement unit</u>
Purchases: Ongoing consumables (general)	100% meet GreenNY purchasing specifications	Cost
Purchases: Ongoing consumables (single use plastics)	100% meet GreenNY purchasing specifications	Cost
Purchases: Office equipment, appliances, audiovisual equipment, and other electric powered equipment	100% meet GreenNY purchasing specifications	Cost
Purchases: Lamps	50% of lamps contain no mercury (with equivalent energy efficiency as mercury containing lamps) or have an average of 25 picograms of mercury per lumen-hour or less	Number of lamps
Purchases: Food and beverage	15% meet sustainability criteria	Cost

**PROCEDURES**

**iii. Roles and Responsibilities**

Mark Lichtenstein, Chief of Staff, Executive Operating Officer and Chief Sustainability Officer, serves as the responsible party for this policy. The responsible party ensures that this policy is executed and that all individuals and any relevant contracted vendors responsible for purchasing materials on campus are aware of the goals and procedures detailed in this policy. Further, the responsible party is responsible for sharing and refining this policy with the Business Office and encouraging policy adoption accordingly. The responsible party is responsible for reviewing and updating this policy upon the interval specified in the quality assurance section. The responsible party will ensure that appropriate individuals are informed of policy updates as they occur.

**iv. Procedures and Strategies for Implementation**

All ongoing consumable and durable commodities and electronic equipment purchased for use at SUNY ESF will abide by the green purchasing requirements set by the NYS Governor under [Executive Order 4 and by the College’s Break Free From Plastic Pledge](#). As a State agency, SUNY ESF must abide by State regulations, follow guidelines and use resources/specifications provided by the NYS Office of General Services when purchasing ongoing consumables and electronic equipment. EO 4 contains the following language:

*State agencies and authorities are required to purchase commodities, services, and technology that meet the approved green procurement specifications. Executive Order 4, Establishing a State Green Procurement and Agency Sustainability Program, established the creation of green procurement lists and specifications of commodities, services, and technology for use by state agencies during a procurement. The specifications identify product criteria that will:*  
*Reduce or eliminate the health and environmental risks from the use or release of toxic substances;*

*Minimize the risks of the discharge of pollutants into the environment;*  
*Minimize the volume and toxicity of packaging;*  
*Maximize the use of recycled content and sustainably managed renewable resources;*  
*Provide other environmental and health benefits.*  
(NYS OGS, 2019, Retrieved on 08/10/19, at: <https://ogs.ny.gov/greenny/executive-order-4-approved-specifications> )

As part of EO 4, New York State's Office of General Services provides [a detailed list of green purchasing specifications](#) for many materials. Specifications do not exist for every consumable or durable commodity, however; specifications are continually created and adopted by NYS. In most cases these specifications, applicable to all New York State agencies, also align with [LEED v4.1 criterion](#). Purchasers at the College should strive to meet both GreenNY and LEED v4.1 criteria. However, if these standards are not in alignment purchasers should abide by GreenNY standards (linked above). Purchasers must always be in compliance with the College's Break Free From Plastics Pledge.

Purchasers procuring products and commodities that are not covered by NYS EO4 specifications must strive to ensure that they are covered by one or more of the following 3<sup>rd</sup> party certifications:

- [GreenSeal](#)
- [UL EcoLogo](#)
- [ENERGY STAR](#)
- [Forest Stewardship Council](#)
- [EPA Safer Choice](#)
- [USDA Certified BioBased](#)
- [Biodegradable Products Institute](#)
- [Cradle to Cradle](#)

Purchasers procuring products and commodities that are not covered by NYS EO4 specifications or the previously mentioned 3<sup>rd</sup> party certifications must strive to ensure that they are covered by the following ESF Purchasing Guidelines.:

- Product is made from recycled content
- Minimal, recyclable and/or compostable packaging
- Product is easily reusable/durable
- Uses replaceable/refillable parts.

### **Break Free From Plastic Pledge Criteria**

The following single use items are no longer able to be purchased with State funding for use on College property or for College events. Members of the campus community who purchase these items with their own funds should avoid bringing them to campus to the greatest extent practicable.

- Single-use plastic utensils;
- Single-use plastic straws and stirrers;
- Single-use plastic food service ware (cups, plates, bowls, trays, sauce dishes, lids etc.);
- Single-use plastic clamshells and to-go containers
- All polystyrene (Styrofoam and similar) food service products;
- Single-use plastic-lined cups and bowls (coffee cups, soup bowls, snack boats etc.);
- Single-use plastic-wrapped condiments, sauces, and seasonings (butter, jelly, peanut butter, creamers, sugars, salt, pepper etc.);

- Individually-packaged items with bulk alternatives (napkins, oyster crackers, mints, toothpicks etc.);
- Individually wrapped fresh baked goods;
- Single-use hot beverage packets unnecessarily packaged in plastic (K-cups, plastic wrapped tea bags, etc.);
- Plastic shopping bags;
- Plastic-wrapped giveaways.

Exemptions:

- Pre-packaged plastic wrapped retail items (chip bags, granola bar wrappers, candy bar wrappers, toiletries etc.);
- Plastic trash and recycling bags;
- Plastic wrap for use during food prep (this does not refer to individually wrapped food items, as noted above);
- Plastic and polystyrene (Styrofoam) packing material from incoming orders;
- Plastic packaging from external caterers;
- Single-use plastics used in academic setting (lab equipment etc.);
- Single-use plastics necessary for health and safety purposes (medical plastics etc.)

Single use paper items coated in plastic are not a viable substitute for the products listed in above. Members of the campus community are encouraged to use durable, reusable and washable items to replace single use items. Single use compostable products are able to be purchased with State dollars and used on ESF's campuses. However, they must be certified by the [Biodegradable Products Institute](#) (BPI). In all instances, reusable alternatives should be favored over single-use compostable items.

Accessibility is important to maintain; therefore, if you need an accommodation exempting you from this portion of the Policy, please contact the Responsible Party. Point of purchase (Café's and catering companies etc.) should make these single use items available upon request for those that require a reasonable accommodation.

### Food and Beverage Criteria

Food and beverage purchases shall meet the following criteria:

- **Sustainable agriculture.** The food or beverage must be labeled USDA Organic, Food Alliance Certified, Rainforest Alliance Certified, Protected Harvest Certified, Fair Trade, or Marine Stewardship Council's Blue Eco-Label, or labeled with the European Community Organic Production logo in accordance with Regulations (EC) No. 834/2007 and (EC) No. 889/2008.
- **Local sourcing.** The food or beverage must contain raw materials harvested and produced within 100 miles (160 kilometers) of the site.

### Policy Implementation

The GreenNY specs do not recommend specific products for purchase. The [NYS eMarketplace](#) designates items on State contract that meet EO4 specifications, but this list is not exhaustive nor particularly easy to filter and search.

This Policy and Appendix aim to 1) increase awareness of the EO4 specifications/mandate, 2) comply with the College's Break Free from Plastic Pledge, 3) comply with LEED v.4 O+M requirements and 4)

lead to the creation of a Green Purchasing Guide. This Guide will link campus users directly to products that meet green purchasing specifications and are able to be directly purchased. The Guide will endeavor to include products that are available on state contract and/or through a preferred source and/or Minority/Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) prior to recommending a discretionary purchase. The Guide will be added to this Policy, as an Appendix, upon completion and updated as necessary.

**Quality Assurance/Quality Control Processes**

The responsible executive will evaluate purchasing activity on a yearly basis to evaluate progress towards the implementation goals outlined on Page 4. If any purchases are not being recorded properly, the responsible party will inform the appropriate individuals to ensure that activities are recorded moving forward. If any implementation goals are not being met, the purchasing department will investigate the situation and will work with the individuals purchasing materials to resolve the issue and evaluate whether updates are necessary to the policy or the purchasing processes in order to achieve the implementation goals.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

Office of Sustainability and Purchasing Office/Business Office/ Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Share awareness and educational resources about New York State’s green purchasing mandates (Executive Order #4) throughout the College.</li> <li>▪ Educate relevant decision makers about available green product and services specifications and resources.</li> <li>▪ Offer support and training resources (as needed) to help with the implementation of this policy across departments.</li> </ul>
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**HISTORY – POLICY REVISION RECORD**

<b>MM/DD/YYYY – Policy Implementation</b>	November 2021
MM/DD/YYYY – Campus Comment	
Initial Development	Fall 2021

## Appendix I – Policy Creation

College-level purchasing data was obtained and analyzed for the purposes of creating and implementing this Policy. The eleven (11) most frequently used<sup>1</sup> vendors in 2019<sup>2</sup> include:

- CDW
- Fisher Scientific
- Forestry Suppliers
- Hillyard
- Intivity
- Proftech (Staples)
- Dell
- Gholkar's
- Right Price
- B&H Photo
- VWR

These vendors provided a complete list of every commodity purchased during the calendar year (or corresponding fiscal year). These commodities were then ranked by total expenditure per vendor and categorized as:

- Electronics
- Office Supplies
- Trades Equipment/Materials
- Cleaning Supplies & Equipment
- Lab/Field Work Supplies
- Tools
- Apparel
- Chemicals & Biological Specimen/Reagents
- Food and Cutlery

This categorization captures the top five commodities purchased by the College in a typical year, by cost. As described above, the NYS EO 4 Approved Purchasing Specifications establish, “the creation of green procurement lists and specifications of commodities, services, and technology for use by state agencies during a procurement”. These specifications offer detailed information about what characteristics must be present in specific products in order for them to be considered “green”. The specifications, however, do not recommend specific products for purchase. The [NYS eMarketplace](#) designates items on State contract that meet EO4 specifications, but this list is not exhaustive nor particularly easy to filter and search.

This Policy and Appendix aim to 1) increase awareness of the EO4 specifications/mandate, 2) comply with the College’s Break Free from Plastic Pledge, 3) comply with LEED v.4 O+M requirements and 4) lead to the creation of a Green Purchasing Guide. This Guide will link campus users directly to products that meet green purchasing specifications and are able to be directly purchased. This Guide will endeavor to include products that are available on state contract and/or through a preferred source and/or Minority/Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) prior to recommending a discretionary purchase. The Guide will be added to this Policy, as an Appendix, upon completion and updated as necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> Determined by dollar expenditure

<sup>2</sup> 2019 selected to avoid data being skewed by the COVID-19 pandemic