



Green Products Innovation Institute Background

Overview

The Green Products Innovation Institute, Inc. (GPII) is a non-profit organization based in California focused on transforming the making and consumption of things into a regenerative force for the planet. GPII uses design, based on the laws of nature, to help industry create products that are safe for people and the environment. This rethinking of how we design, manufacture, use and reuse materials will spur a new era of research and innovation, simultaneously driving economic, ecological and social prosperity.

The Institute was founded in December of 2009 by a group of design, science, industry, government, environmental and sustainability professionals. It is supported by California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and advances the framework outlined in “Cradle to Cradle,” the seminal book by architect and designer William McDonough and chemist Dr. Michael Braungart.

Rather than focusing on how industry can become “less bad,” the Institute is set up to be a resource for those who aspire to be “more good” and achieve new levels of environmental and human health and safety for all products sold in California. GPII, as an open, public and collaborative certification organization, will engage key stakeholders worldwide. The result will be a transparent, independently verified framework that can be trusted and looked to for innovation and guidance as we move toward a better future.

“Perhaps this is the moment in our history when we realize that if today’s tragedies and unintended consequences are perpetuated by our everyday acts, then our cultures have adopted a strategy of tragedy. Any enterprise that recognizes that it has become strategically tragic must urgently establish new long term goals and appropriate strategies of change. Only by adopting principled strategies of change will human enterprise have a new and enduring strategy of hope.”

-- William McDonough

Part of California’s Commitment

California’s environmental policies have created a unique opportunity for the Cradle to Cradle® thinking to grow and flourish as a public-private partnership. In 2005, Governor Schwarzenegger signed the nation’s first law requiring disclosure of chemical ingredients in cosmetics. In 2006, he signed a law creating a bio-monitoring program to measure human exposure to chemicals. In 2008, he signed a landmark, first-in-the-nation Green Chemistry program into law that creates the toughest, most comprehensive regulatory regime in the country for identifying harmful chemicals in consumer products and requiring manufacturers of those products to evaluate safer alternatives. This law also gives authority to California’s Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) to take action based on the risk data and alternatives

available, with responses that range from no action to requiring additional research to imposing restrictions on use and even banning the use of a chemical outright.

“The time is now for us to go beyond simply being ‘less bad’ and to lead the world in the invention and innovation of ‘more good’ with Cradle to Cradle products and a prosperous Cradle to Cradle economy. Together, we will inspire and transform the world.” Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger

-- Governor Schwarzenegger

GPPII is eager to collaborate with DTSC to provide companies, government and consumers with data on the toxicity characteristics of chemicals and materials used in products so that industry can not only identify “chemicals of concern,” but also the “positive” chemicals that could be used to replace them. The Institute’s goal is to effectively coordinate with DTSC to find practical solutions to the alternatives problem—offering industry a pathway to comply with, and even exceed, new consumer product regulations. The fruits of this partnership will help make the regulatory program more efficient and effective while engaging the industry’s unique capability to innovate quickly.

GPPII’s Core Functions:

GPPII’s leadership will advocate for strong standards in California and worldwide in the following areas:

Establishing a Framework

Nationally-renown design consultancy firm, MBDC, has given the certification mark, along with the Cradle to Cradle® protocols to the Institute, which will now be responsible for certifying products. Multiple industries have already demonstrated the viability and benefits of designing products according to the Cradle to Cradle® framework, such as Herman Miller, Shaw Industries, Method, Ford Motor Company and Aveda. To date, more than 300 products and 90 companies have engaged in the C2C certification process.

The Institute will work collaboratively with key stakeholders from academia, the NGO environmental community, government and industry to establish a rating system for assessing and constant improvement of products that is transparent and independently verified based upon five (5) categories: (1) safe and appropriately sourced materials; (2) material reutilization; (3) renewable energy; (4) access to and release of abundant, clean water; and (5) social responsibility. Products that meet the transparent criteria of this rating system will receive the Cradle to Cradle® certification mark.

Training and Education

GPPII will then train and certify assessors, called “Licensed Assessment Partners (LAPs),” who will assist companies in complying with the program requirements and DTSC’s regulatory requirements. The LAPs will submit their assessments to the Institute for auditing and a certificate will be issued if the product meets the pre-requisites. DTSC, which would accredit entities like the Institute, will be able to audit and validate the Institute’s procedures at all times.

Transparent Product Registry and Positive List

After the GPII has rated a given product, it will work with companies to determine the latter's trajectory for improvement across each of the five Cradle to Cradle® categories. Companies who participate will voluntarily share information about the chemistry of their materials, along with manufacturing processes, to help transform industry as a whole. Thus, the backbone of the Institute is a robust database that is partially proprietary, partially collaborative. The proprietary portion is the thorough review of the makeup of a product, down to the parts-per-million and parts per billion level. The characteristics of individual chemicals, disassociated from product formulations, will become part of the collaborative portion and lead to the identification and sharing of chemicals, materials, and processes that are evaluated as valuable contributions to positively defined products, i.e. a "Positive List". This Positive List will provide a global, open innovation platform that will facilitate a Cradle to Cradle® economy.

Job Creation

Innovation in the five Cradle to Cradle® categories, as an expedient and effective alternative to regulation, will spur the creation of safer materials and industrial processes and create new jobs.

As companies in California and across the country adopt this new lens, or start new ventures based on systems-thinking solutions to harmful products, new markets will be created. Science and technology are at the heart of this new thinking. Safe materials development, scientific research, technology development, commercialization, and technology transfer have tremendous potential to build a stronger, healthier economy and workforce.

In 2007, the clean technology sector, which includes green chemistry, grew to \$3.5 billion nationally. This investment equates to 48,000 new direct jobs in the U.S. and additional revenues of \$10.8 billion. While energy and renewable technology companies received the lion's share of that investment, green chemistry garnered the second largest share (Source: *California Green Chemistry Initiative, Final Report*, 2008). The job economy will grow exponentially when commerce, academia and the NGO community team up to reinvent materials and industrial processes.

Funding

Initially, GPII will be funded by private donations from organizations and individuals with the same core values as the Institute. After the Institute is established, it will be funded through training and product registration fees.

An initial grant has been generously provided by the DOEN Foundation in the amount of \$165,000, with additional grants pending. DOEN actively seeks pioneers who make a positive contribution to decrease the negative effects of human behavior on climate change, cultivating an open society based on solidarity and promoting a new economy. The Foundation was established in 1991 by the Dutch Postcode Lottery to generate funds for charity organizations dedicated to 'people' and the 'planet.' As well as issuing grants, DOEN also encourages entrepreneurship by issuing loans and guarantees, and by having a participating interest in various companies. DOEN supports both small and larger initiatives that are compatible with the Institute's core values, namely sustainable, entrepreneurial and spirited.

Additionally, a grant has been promised by the J.M. Kaplan Fund. The J.M. Kaplan Fund was established in 1945 and has its focus on three program areas: environment, historic preservation and migrations.

***Green Products Innovation Institute – Board, Staff, Governance
Founders’ Circle:***

The following individuals have joined William McDonough and Michael Braungart in a newly formed Founders’ Circle:

Brad Pitt, Actor, Humanitarian, Philanthropist

Robert Kennedy, Jr., President of Waterkeeper Alliance, Professor

Terry Tamminen, former Secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency, Cabinet Secretary, the Chief Policy Advisor to Governor Schwarzenegger

Julie Wrigley, Co-Chair Global Institute of Sustainability, Arizona State University

Wendy Schmidt, Schmidt Family Foundation, 11th Hour, ReMain Nantucket, Natural Resources Defense Council and the Energy Foundation

Yves Behar, Founder, FuseProject

Richard D. Kaplan, AIA and Senior Trustee (and former Co-Chairman), The J.M. Kaplan Fund, Inc.

Lyn and Norman Lear

Lauren Heine, Ph.D., Science Director, Clean Production Action

Chad Hurley, Founder, YouTube

Steven Cayre, Founder, Steven J. Cayre Foundation

Michelle Kaufmann, Michelle Kaufmann Studio

Jillian Manus, Parnter, Manus & Associates Literary Agency

Board of Directors & Staff:

The following individuals comprise the Green Product Innovation Institute’s officers and Board:

President: Bridgett Luther, Director of Conservation, State of California

Treasurer: Warner Philips, CEO of Tendris

Secretary: Zem Joaquin, CEO of eco-fabulous

Director: Tom Darden II, CEO of Cherokee Industries

Director (non-voting): Maziar Movassaghi, Acting Director, Department of Toxic Substances Control, CalEPA

Director: Beth Rattner, Executive Director, Green Products Innovation Institute

INSTITUTE INFORMATION: Beth Rattner, Executive Director
Beth@GPinnovation.org
www.gpinnovation.org