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3rd Annual Sustainable Economy Conference Session Spotlights Corporate Opportunities and Risks

BOSTON — Leaders in product stewardship have learned that product responsibility is not only important for the environment — it is often better for the bottom line. The [third annual Sustainable Economy Conference](#), slated for April 30 at the Federal Reserve Bank in Boston, will feature a panel session titled: Product Stewardship and Reducing Impacts along the Product Supply Chain. Scott Cassel, CEO and Founder of the Product Stewardship Institute (PSI), will moderate the panel, which will include the perspectives of three nationally-renowned leaders: Mark Buckley, vice president of environmental affairs at Staples; Ben Grossman, co-president of Grossman Marketing and Eric Hudson, founder and CEO of Preserve.

Each year, Americans generate 250 million tons of garbage, throwing away a significant amount of materials that could be reused or recycled. As a result, an emerging U.S. “product stewardship” perspective among manufacturers is emphasizing the reduced impact of product lifecycles on society and the environment. The strength of the product stewardship effort has led companies to initiate voluntary actions, as well as governments to pass more than 70 extended producer responsibility laws in 32 states, covering 10 product categories such as electronics, paint, fluorescent lamps and phone books. These programs help stem the loss of valuable resources while generating recycling jobs and other economic value.

“There is increasing interest from companies to take greater responsibility for reducing the impacts from their products,” noted Cassel. “The Sustainable Economy Conference panel will highlight three leading companies that will discuss the innovations they have implemented that reduce environmental impacts in an economically viable and even profitable way.”

The Sustainable Economy Conference panel will explore legislative risks to business, opportunities for business to become first-movers, important sustainability issues for companies and ways in which industries can reduce environmental and social impacts of products internationally. Buckley will discuss major retailer Staples’ sustainability programs, both in its retail stores and across the supply chain, including its initiatives to reduce the environmental impacts of its products. Grossman will discuss how his firm differentiates products and services, based on environmental criteria, to provide a competitive advantage to industry leaders in the marketplace. Lastly, Hudson, whose company manufactures products from 100 percent recycled plastics and post-consumer paper, will probe the challenges in competing with unsustainable products.

“Those companies that take steps to make their products and services more sustainable will get ahead of their competitors,” said Grossman. “Assuming accountability for the social and environmental consequences of complex products adds value to our world as well as to the bottom line.”

Product Stewardship Institute, Inc. (PSI) is a national non-profit environmental institute with membership from 47 states, more than 200 local governments, and over 75 businesses, organizations, universities, and non-U.S. governments. For more information on PSI’s Advisory Council, visit the [PSI website](#).

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