

Insights from the 2024 Product Stewardship Society Conference (PSX 2024)

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Keynote speaker John Warner set the stage for the Product Stewardship Society’s 2024 conference, PSX 2024, with his call to action for both industry and academia to partner with business entrepreneurs to innovate new, “green” chemistry. With climate change and natural disasters now affecting areas previously considered to be “safe,” the role of product stewards in protecting our planet has never been more critical. The Product Stewardship Society’s passion for global product sustainability was a theme that resonated throughout the week – from forums on emerging regulatory requirements for chemicals of concern to best practices for ensuring accountability in environmental, social and governance (ESG) programs.

Doing more with less

Due to the continual global increase in complexity and number of product stewardship and sustainability regulations, the theme of “doing more with less” was equally pervasive at PSX 2024. Using the United States as an example: Since the passing of the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act in 2016, the United States has more than tripled the timeline for introducing new chemicals to the market. Mandatory reporting on existing chemicals, including reporting on greater than 1,400 per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) compounds without a de minimis level, sets a new standard for supply chain communication. The incorporation of sustainability



principles into regulations also establishes new expectations for compliance. For example, California's Senate Bill 343 requires companies to ensure that local recycling infrastructure is in place before recycling claims can be made. In a country formerly recognized as an attractive market to commercialize new chemicals, the hurdles in the way of innovation have never been higher.

Budget constraints lead to streamlining

As the workload of the product steward perpetually increases, the budgets available to both government and industry to fund regulatory reviews simultaneously decrease. This has resulted in headcount reductions across numerous product stewardship organizations. Faced with the challenge of doing more with less, PSX 2024 conference attendees discussed opportunities to streamline reporting processes, for example by adapting standard operating procedures for the 2024 Chemical Data Reporting Rule and PFAS Reporting Rule, both under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA).

Digitalization leads to optimization

During the conference, questions arose over the role of technology and how to incorporate artificial intelligence (AI) into product stewardship business processes without sacrificing quality. Digitalization in product compliance is transforming how organizations manage regulatory demands and optimize operational efficiency. Key opportunities include automated regulatory data updates and centralized compliance repositories, that can simplify data access, reduce data silos, and streamline information sharing across departments and supply chain partners. When integrated with enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems like SAP ERP, these repositories improve accessibility and accelerate data retrieval and reporting, making compliance data readily available across enterprises.

Another recurring theme at the conference was enhanced cross-functional data integration, which allows compliance data to be embedded in procurement, sales, and logistics workflows to support more informed decision-making. Additionally, it was noted that automated supplier compliance checks



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and AI-driven document management solutions streamline supplier auditing, document classification, and safety data sheet (SDS) management. These digitalization initiatives could ultimately enable clients to reduce manual effort, improve data accuracy, and achieve greater transparency and efficiency in meeting regulatory standards and achieving sustainability goals.



How can ERM help with your product stewardship challenges?

ERM's global product stewardship team includes over 200 scientists and regulatory experts in over 25 countries who help our clients monitor and comply with the ever-changing regulatory landscape. Our experts leverage local knowledge of the product stewardship landscape, native languages, and business norms to help our clients comply with product requirements around the globe. We understand that resources are limited, and we have experience optimizing programs to help you prioritize activities, build resiliency, and prepare for future needs. ERM's Global Digital Services business unit, which focuses on the operationalization and digitalization aspects of product stewardship and compliance, helps clients throughout the product lifecycle, from ideation through end of life, including all the operational – SDS, label, dangerous goods, and product compliance/ substance volume tracking (SVT) – aspects in between. We combine our digital services capabilities, our deep understanding of the regulatory landscape, and the leading technology solutions in our partner ecosystem to create unique competencies that establish and maintain rigorous, enterprise-level product stewardship business services.

Learn more at <https://www.erm.com/solutions/product-stewardship/> or contact:

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