

PROMOTING THE RECYCLING OF CONSUMER ELECTRONICS

BACKGROUND: Consumer electronics (CE) products have improved lives and changed the world by extending information and entertainment to everyone – regardless of income or geographic location. As CE products become increasingly affordable, it can be economical for consumers to replace a product in addition to repairing older equipment. While displaced products may be out-of-date, they certainly are too valuable to be completely discarded.

Most consumer electronics products contain valuable components, such as precious metals, plastics and other raw materials. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), these compounds, if properly managed and disposed of, present little or no risk to human health or the environment. CEA and its member companies will continue to fully support the safe and appropriate recycling and reuse of consumer electronics products, whether this occurs domestically or overseas. However, voluntary programs alone cannot resolve the very important issue of electronics recycling.

CEA EVALUATION: We strongly believe that a successful national electronics recycling framework should be established to address the management of this issue domestically. The current de facto approach is an evolving patchwork of state-by-state legislation. This conflicting, ad hoc pattern of regulation imposes unnecessary burdens on global technology companies and creates significant confusion for consumers. Additionally, CEA continually evaluates electronics recycling programs overseas in order to monitor influences on CE companies globally.

CEA POSITION: End-of-use frameworks should apportion responsibility among all of the stakeholders and ensure a level playing field, while promoting a widespread and adequately financed electronics recycling solution. Above all, we must develop a solution that is convenient for the consumer and one that is broadly consistent in product scope. CEA believes that a national framework should include the following elements:

- a. Market-based Solutions** - The federal government should support states choosing to rely on effective market-based solutions (e.g., tax credits).
- b. Fostering Design for Environment** - The federal government should continue to promote procurement policies based on environmental criteria, akin to Executive Order 13423, harnessing the market power of the federal government to provide a direct sales-based incentive to manufacturers. CEA also recommends that similar procurement policies be adopted by other governments around the world.
- c. Ensuring a Level Playing Field through Federal Policy** - Federal measures should put in place a framework that enables states' ability to ensure a level competitive playing field for in-state retailers with Internet and out-of-state retailers.
- d. National Recycling Third-Party Organization** - States considering different recycling approaches may opt to select a third-party organization ("TPO") to collect and administer recycling funds, serving as a further incentive to create state-level systems complementing a national solution. A national TPO should include manufacturers, retailers and recyclers in its governance structure.

In emerging economies, reliable and effective electronics recycling provides low-cost access to technology and advancements in sustainable development an opportunity to participate in the global

economy. The CE industry works to educate workers worldwide on proper recycling techniques and supports safe and responsible electronics recycling, regardless of where it occurs.

As we continue to make strides in eco-friendly design initiatives, lead the CE industry on environmental issues and be a part of the effort to educate consumers about electronics recycling, CEA stands ready to work with state, federal and international policymakers and all interested parties to reach common-sense, solutions that make recycling as convenient as possible.

For a database of electronics recyclers, as well as questions to ask electronics recyclers or event organizers, tips for consumers on how to save energy, and a catalog of energy efficient products, consumers should visit www.myGreenElectronics.org.

For more information, please contact CEA at publicpolicy@CE.org or visit www.CE.org/governmentaffairs.