

The Alliance
For a Clean and
Healthy Vermont

www.alliancevt.org

The Alliance for a Clean and Healthy Vermont is a health-based coalition of citizens, children's advocates, health professionals, housing groups, environmentalists, and others committed to protecting human health from toxic chemical exposure.

Our goal is to phase out the use of persistent toxic chemicals and to advance a precautionary approach towards the use and regulation of chemicals. We are working with business and government leaders to promote policies that protect public health and support the safest alternatives.

Founding Organizations

- Informed Green Solutions
- River Network
- Toxics Action Center
- Vermont Public Interest Research Group
- Voices For Vermont's Children

The Alliance for a Clean and Healthy Vermont includes more than a dozen organizations.

Electronic Waste



E-waste is the fastest growing waste stream in the United States.

The growing problem of toxic e-waste

Electronic waste, commonly referred to as e-waste, is the fastest growing waste stream in the United States. According to the International Association of Electronics Recyclers, Americans scrap 400 million units of electronics annually. And in Vermont, solid waste districts, alliances, and municipalities collected approximately 1.15 million pounds of discarded electronics in 2006 alone.

While some e-waste is recycled properly, the majority is trashed in landfills. This presents grave environmental and health concerns as e-waste can be dangerously toxic, containing lead, mercury, brominated flame retardants, cadmium, and other chemicals. Computer monitors and televisions, for instance, can contain four to eight pounds of lead. When electronics are placed into landfills their toxic contents can leach into our groundwater. For the small percentage of e-waste that is currently "recycled," much of that is exported to developing countries that don't have protections for the environment or worker safety.

Americans scrap 400 million units of electronics annually.

- International Association of Electronics Recyclers

Producer Responsibility - A fair and innovative solution

Vermont has an opportunity to better manage the waste and support green design while easing the burden on local citizens and institutions. Instead of relying on municipalities, solid waste districts, and taxpayers to bear the burden of e-waste, producers are taking responsibility for ensuring that their discarded products are managed in an environmentally sensitive manner.

While conventional recycling programs are important, they will never address issues related to the rapid use of resources and the inclusion of hazardous materials. Understanding this, states are dramatically rethinking their approach to recycling by looking to producers. By financing the cost of recycling their products, manufacturers will have a powerful incentive to design their electronics to last longer and to exclude the toxic materials that make recycling so difficult and expensive.

Eighteen states have already passed producer responsibility e-waste laws.

SOLUTIONS FOR A SAFE & HEALTHY FUTURE

Quick Facts:

- According to the EPA, in 2005, the United States generated 2.63 million tons of e-waste. Of that, more than 87% went to landfills and incinerators.
- In Vermont, solid waste districts, alliances, and municipalities collected approximately 1.15 million pounds of discarded electronics in 2006 alone.
- According to the Consumer Electronics Association, in 2008, Americans are expected to purchase 32 million new digital TVs.
- Americans bought nearly 4 million televisions for the 2008 Superbowl
- E-waste contains toxic chemicals such as lead, mercury, brominated flame retardants, and cadmium. Computer monitors and televisions can contain four to eight pounds of lead.

Solutions to Protect Health and the Environment

1) **Prohibit the dumping of e-waste into landfills**

In Vermont, there is currently no law that prevents e-waste from being thrown into landfills. Vermont must enact a landfill ban on e-waste and ensure that these hazardous materials are being properly recycled.

2) **Establish producer responsibility programs**

Electronics manufacturers must be required to share in the responsibility of collecting and recycling their products. Such collection programs should be convenient and accessible to all Vermont residents.



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