



A non-profit association that provides statewide proactive leadership on waste reduction and recycling through education, advocacy, collaboration, programs and services.

Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin (AROW) Testimony in Support of AB 278

Delivered By:

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AROW Board of Directors – Secretary

AROW Product Stewardship Committee – Co-Chair

Chairman Black, Representative Bernard Schaber, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin Board of Directors and the organization's Product Stewardship Committee and Hazardous and Special Waste Committee, I thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony in support of AB 278 and electronics recycling.

The Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin, or AROW, is an association representing a dynamic cross section of the recycling industry. Our members include local and state government agencies, private recycling operations, refuse haulers, landfill operators and non-profit organizations. AROW members have a long tradition of promoting effective, efficient and environmentally sound solid waste management systems and resource recovery efforts and whole heartedly support AB 278.

I would like to highlight some of the key reasons for our support:

- 1) **This legislation emerged through a well informed process.** AROW members were at the table during the development of this policy. Local governments offered data on collection weight and cost. Private recyclers offered input regarding current and future processing capacity, best management practices and reporting requirements. And other stakeholders including waste haulers, landfill operators and non-profit organizations offered input in crafting legislation that led to the right solution for Wisconsin.
- 2) **While it is critical to create the right solution for Wisconsin, this policy's consistency with legislation passed in Minnesota and other neighboring states is also important.** The Minnesota electronics recycling bill was developed based on guiding principles agreed upon by a coalition of Midwestern states. Based on successful implementation of the Minnesota law, the Illinois and Indiana legislatures recently passed bills that utilize this same model. As you are all well aware, the value of creating effective and efficient legislation is at a premium during this tough economic climate. In modeling our bill after the successful Midwestern approach, we can effectively share infrastructure development tools, such as educational and reporting resources. Furthermore, consistency among state programs reduces the burden on the businesses, manufacturers and recyclers who will operate programs across state boundaries.
- 3) **Our members value the creation of a mandatory electronics recovery program to ensure consistent and widespread electronics recycling programs throughout the state.** This bill creates a level playing field for retailers, manufacturers and recyclers of electronics. Also, voluntary programs do not provide the same assurance that rural and often underserved portions of the state are served. Through a mandatory solution, state and local governments can work to promote a statewide network of collection opportunities instead of trying to offer piece meal solutions on an infrequent basis to their constituents.

While our local governments have historically borne the burden of managing our waste at the end of its useful life, we cannot expect them to maintain this same level of involvement as increasingly toxic and complex materials enter into our places of work, our homes and eventually our trash cans. We also cannot

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expect local governments to continue to subsidize the expense of electronics recycling in a time when municipal budgets are increasingly strained. Moreover, communities currently unable to offer electronics recycling programs are spending valuable tax dollars clearing road sides, wooded areas, lakes and rivers from illegal dumping of these toxic gadgets.

Without responsibility for the proper end-of-life management of their products, manufacturers have had little reason to design their products in a way that would minimize these costs. When manufacturers are held responsible for recycling their products they will have an incentive to design products that are less toxic, easier to disassemble, and made of recycled content.

- 4) **Finally, AROW members champion this policy for its promise to create a broad demand for recycling services** throughout the state. The creation of jobs coupled with the recovery of valuable resources such as copper, steel and precious metals from electronics is precisely the type of sustainable infusion necessary to reenergize Wisconsin's economy.

Thank you for your time and consideration for this bill. We encourage its swift passage so that Wisconsin's recycling professionals can begin working to ensure its success.