

July 15, 2009

Members, Wisconsin Assembly
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Members of the Wisconsin Assembly:

As the processors, managers, and consumers of electronics in Wisconsin, we urge **immediate concurrence and implementation of SB 107**. It has broad support from recyclers, school districts, businesses, waste haulers, citizens, local governments and environmental groups.

End-of-life consumer electronics are the **fastest growing segment of the municipal waste stream**. Recent data show that 10,000 tons of computer monitors and 24,000 tons of televisions are land-filled annually in Wisconsin. If improperly disposed, discarded electronics pose a threat to human and environmental health due to the toxic materials they contain. Responsible electronics recycling prevents the release of these hazards into the air and water. Furthermore, electronics recycling also **recovers valuable resources** such as copper, steel and precious metals - conserving energy and natural resources and ensuring their continued use in the global marketplace.

To ensure successful resource recovery, Wisconsin's electronics **recycling industry is poised for significant growth** upon passage of SB 107 – creating an infusion of jobs and revenue into the state's economy. According to recent data compiled by the Department of Natural Resources, five of the state's largest recycling operations processed about **34 thousand tons** of electronics in 2008.

- Cascade Asset Management, a national company headquartered in Madison, WI: In 2008, Cascade processed about 5,000 tons of scrap electronics and employed 55 people at its Madison office. Cascade estimates revenues of about \$8 million for 2009. Cascade would be able to triple their capacity to respond to increased demand within 3 months.
- CRT Processing, a national company headquartered in Janesville, WI: In 2008, CRT Processing processed about 21 thousand tons of material in its 140,000 square foot facility in Janesville – material received from Wisconsin and, in large part, from other states with mandatory recycling programs. CRT Processing is one of only a few facilities in the US offering glass-to-glass recycling and receives discarded CRTs (cathode ray tubes) from around the nation. CRT has nearly 150 employees in its Janesville plant and could add about 40,000 square feet of processing space in a 30 day period, increasing its processing volume by between 50-75% and employment by 50%.
- Two other companies interviewed, one located in La Crosse, WI and the other in Milwaukee, WI, stated they could double or triple their processing capacity without needing to expand floor space. This increase would also **yield 50% more jobs and double or triple their revenue**.

Additionally, five local governments interviewed reported they collected about 500 tons, or 1 million pounds, of discarded electronics in 2008 and spent nearly \$192,000 in collection and processing costs. Dane County, in a single 5 hour collection event in 2009, reported collecting an additional 400 tons. The total cost of this event was \$190,000, with all but \$30,000 paid by Samsung as part of a pilot collection event. **Local governments anticipate collecting over four to five pounds per capita upon implementation of SB 107.**

SB 107 creates a flexible, market driven financing mechanism for the collection and responsible processing of household electronic equipment by shifting some of the financial burden from the taxpayer to the manufacturers and their consumers – the people who directly affect the design of and benefit from the use of this technology. 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.

We understand there continues to be a push for the “Apple amendment” – even though this amendment failed in committee – which argues for manufacturers to count collections from schools toward meeting their recycling obligation without counting the donations made to the schools in the calculations of determining their obligation. The implication of such an amendment is that every pound collected from a school is potentially a pound not collected from households. **The “Apple amendment” is not supported by the bill’s authors because it expands the scope of the bill beyond the intent.** Schools currently have opportunities for successful recycling through take-back programs offered by the manufacturers from whom they purchased or were given computer equipment. Households, on the other hand, do not have such easily available opportunities – which is why this legislation has been developed.

We encourage the immediate concurrence and implementation of this bill to ensure timely development of Wisconsin’s household electronics recycling program. Wisconsin has the processing and collection infrastructure that can quickly be expanded to meet demand. State and local government officials throughout the state have been preparing for the passage of this bill and are developing their 2010 budgets with this in mind. Additionally, residents are **eagerly awaiting options to dispose of electronic waste, and need convenient, responsible programs that assure protection of public health and the environment.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin
City of Fort Atkinson
City of Milwaukee
City of Watertown
City of Whitewater
Clean Wisconsin
Dane County
Dunn County Board of Supervisors
Dunn County Solid Waste and Recycling Management Board
Environmental Law & Policy Center
Fiber Options/Recycling Services, Inc.
George Hayducsko, Solid Waste Director, Dunn
County Solid Waste/Recycling Division
Jefferson County Solid Waste/Air Quality Committee
Jim Cornwell, CRT Processing
Marathon County Solid Waste Department
Mary Klun- Douglas County and City of Superior
Recycling Coordinator, Superior, WI
Mercury Free Wisconsin
Neil Peters-Michaud, Cascade Asset Management
Roger Holman, Solid Waste Director
Waupaca County Solid Waste Management Board
Waupaca County Board of Supervisors
Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter
Terry Mesch, Pepin County Recycling/Solid Waste
WasteCap Wisconsin
Waukesha County
Winnebago County Solid Waste Management Board
Wisconsin Be SMART Coalition
Wisconsin Environment
Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters