

Washington Citizens for Resource Conservation 2006 Program Highlights

Computer and TV Recycling Law Breaks the Ice for Manufacturer Responsibility in Washington

With WCRC's leadership and lots of teamwork, the most progressive electronics recycling law in the country passed in Washington State. This is the biggest step forward for recycling in Washington in over a decade. Washington is only the fourth state in the U.S. to pass comprehensive electronics recycling legislation, and our approach is gaining attention throughout the U.S. and internationally.

The groundbreaking law creates a manufacturer-financed system for recycling computers and TVs starting in 2009. This means free and convenient recycling for all residents, schools and small businesses throughout Washington – in rural and urban areas, and both east and west of the mountains. It also means that manufacturers will have an incentive to design greener products. When manufacturers pay for recycling, they have a financial reason to make computers and TVs that are less toxic and easier to recycle.

WCRC played a lead role in the development and passage of the law. We coordinated with a diverse group of stakeholders to develop a policy that met all our needs - one of our partners called us the “glue” in the process. We led the grassroots organizing effort. And, we communicated with partner groups in their lobbying efforts. Now that the law has passed, WCRC is at the table for the rulemaking process to make sure that it lives up to its intent. This is less glamorous work than passing legislation – but no less important.



Gov. Chris Gregoire signs SB 6428, 20060324-3453 WASENATE db

WCRC's Suellen Mele (left) and our NGO partners watch as Governor Gregoire signs Washington's landmark electronic products recycling legislation.

Opportunities to Recycle E-Waste Right Now - With a Little Help from WCRC



Since it will be a couple of years before the manufacturer programs are established, WCRC continued working in 2006 to expand “Take It Back Networks” to provide opportunities to recycle computers and TVs now. This will also mean more collection locations that can be used in the new system when the law is implemented.

Take It Back Networks are made up of small businesses such as retailers and repair shops that collect computers and TVs, and charge end-of-life fees (until the law is implemented). With WCRC's help, Tacoma and Pierce County successfully kicked off a Take It Back Network in 2006 – adding to existing programs in Snohomish, King and Yakima Counties.

Take-Back Project for Household Medicines Kicks Off

A pilot program taking back unwanted medicines from households kicked off at seven Group Health pharmacies in Washington. Additional locations (including retail pharmacies) will be added in early 2007. WCRC worked side-by-side with government, private non-profit partners to make this happen. We want to make unwanted pharmaceuticals as easy to return as they are to purchase.

Unused medicines are entering lakes, streams and the Puget Sound through improper disposal - down the toilet or in the garbage. Scientists have linked pharmaceuticals in surface waters to potential disruptions of the endocrine systems of hundreds of freshwater, estuarine and marine species.

In 2006, WCRC surveyed King County residents to determine current practices regarding the disposal of pharmaceuticals and the willingness of residents to utilize pharmacy drop-off programs. We've also researched various disposal options. Now, we are taking a lead role on education and outreach. As the project progresses, we'll be working on transitioning the pilot to an ongoing program funded by manufacturers.

Incineration - déjà vu all over again?

In mid-2006, two Council members from Seattle and King County wrote an op-ed supporting "thermal reduction" – known to most of us as incineration. This op-ed raised red flags for us. WCRC is tracking the situation, doing necessary research, and coordinating with other organizations that have similar concerns.

Beverage Container Recycling

WCRC has joined a new effort in Washington State – a multi-stakeholder process to increase the flagging recycling rate of beverage containers. This collaborative effort is examining a broad range of strategies and considering various pilot projects.

Collaborations and Networks

WCRC continues to represent citizens on **Washington's Solid Waste Advisory Committee**, which addresses solid waste, recycling and waste reduction issues that are pertinent statewide.

We collaborate with various networks to increase our effectiveness. WCRC is a member of the **Computer TakeBack Campaign**, a national coalition of organizations promoting clean production and producer take-back of consumer electronics. We are a member of the **Toxic-Free Legacy Coalition** and participate on the **Collaborative on Health and the Environment – Washington**. We also join with about 20 environmental and citizen groups that work together to establish legislative **Priorities for a Healthy Washington**, and to communicate a concise and consistent message to legislators and the governor's office.



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and

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