



A.9049 (SWEENEY, ET AL.)
S.6047 (THOMPSON, ET AL.)

Summary

This bill would require electronics manufacturers in New York State to collect and recycle or reuse their products at the end of their useful lives. Starting June 1, 2010, manufacturers would be responsible for registering annually with the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and responsibly recycling electronic waste. Such waste products include desktop and laptop computers, computer monitors, printers, various types of television sets, and other items. Specifically, this measure would require manufacturers to collect a minimum of 30 percent of current equipment sales annually, increase the collection rate to 45 percent in the second and third year, and up to 75 percent by year four. Manufacturers would also be prohibited from imposing collection fees on consumers. This bill would also establish an Electronic Waste Recycling Fund and monies would be used to implement and enforce the provisions of the legislation.

Explanation

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, more than two million tons of electronics were discarded nationwide in 2005, with less than 15 percent recycled, and the balance ending up in landfills or incinerators. That same year, an estimated 130,000 computers were discarded daily. The expected switch from analog to digital TV broadcasts this year could potentially encourage millions of consumers to discard their old television sets. Adding to the rising flood of e-waste, are the estimated hundreds of millions of pieces of electronics stockpiled by consumers and businesses, waiting to enter the waste stream. Rapid changes in technology also add to the volume of e-waste every day.

E-waste is an environmental hazard. Computer monitors and older TV picture tubes contain on average five pounds of lead and require special handling upon disposal. In addition, these items are often riddled with toxics and known carcinogens such as chromium, cadmium, mercury, beryllium, nickel, zinc and brominated flame retardants. When electronics are not disposed or recycled properly, they pose a threat to public health and the environment. Furthermore, reducing and recycling the raw materials in many electronics conserves natural resources and reduces air and water pollution.

This bill would do much to address the state's growing e-waste challenge while protecting New Yorkers and the health of our natural resources.

Environmental Advocates of New York strongly supports this bill.

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