

Recyclers hail electronic waste legislation

Manufacturing fee for product stewardship considered

By JASON STARR
The Colchester Sun

The Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD) is expecting a new stream of money from electronics manufacturers to handle the stream of waste from their products.

CSWD Environmental and Safety Compliance Manager Jen Holliday anticipates passage of an electronic waste bill through the Vermont Legislature this spring. Senate Bill No. 77 was amended and passed by the House in February, and the amended version is now in the Senate Natural Resources committee.

Similar bills have become law in 20 states, Holliday said.

The legislation is seen as product stewardship for electronics, which are toxic in landfills and costly to recycle. It would require manufacturers to fund electronics collection sites and recycling programs. The electronics recycling program CSWD currently operates, and others initiated by retailers — such as Small Dog Electronics' annual e-waste roundup in April — would benefit.

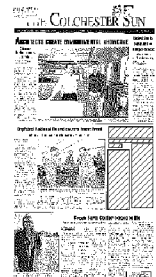
CSWD Spokeswoman Clare Innes said electronics are the fastest-growing waste stream in the state. The district collected a half-million pounds of it in 2008, and sent it along to Good Point Recycling in Middlebury. Good Point strips and separates parts and distributes the pieces to various recyclers.

The legislation calls on the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources to implement a free and convenient way for consumers to recycle the products using fees the state collects from manufacturers that sell electronics in Vermont. Holliday said three permanent collection sites would be set up in most Vermont counties.

The bill would also ban the disposal of computers and other electronic devices in landfills.

Currently, the CSWD charges a fee for electronics recycling, but the fees don't cover the district's costs, Innes said.

"We have limited funds, so if we can get the manufacturers to take responsibility for their piece of it, then we can take that money and dedicate it to resolving other waste streams," Innes said.



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The Essex Reporter

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