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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pennsylvania's waste industry advises customers to get ready for new law mandating recycling of 'e-waste'

HARRISBURG—This year marks the beginning of a new era in the rules that apply to the disposal of electronic devices in Pennsylvania.

“We are taking the first steps into a new era of responsibility,” said Tim O’Donnell, president of the Pennsylvania Waste Industries Association (PWIA).

Under a new state law that takes effect this year, manufacturers that sell electronics in Pennsylvania must establish e-waste recycling programs at no cost to consumers. In addition, retailers are now required to carry only brands that have registered with the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

The law—officially called the Covered Device Recycling Act of 2010—applies to desktop and laptop computers, computer monitors, computer peripherals, and television sets.

O’Donnell said the law will fully take effect in January 2013 when the disposal of these electronic devices in landfills and incinerators will no longer be allowed.

At that point, only DEP-certified recyclers will be allowed to handle the disposal of the electronic devices affected by the law.

“That’s when we will see the greatest impact on consumers,” he said. “Municipal waste trucks will no longer be collecting these devices for disposal at landfills, so our customers need to get ready for this change. You won’t be able to put old computers or TV sets or computer peripherals at the curb to be taken to the landfill or the incinerator, nor will they be permitted to be mixed in with regular household recycling.”

The reason for the law, according to DEP, is that “electronic equipment contains metals that, if not properly managed or contained, can become hazardous wastes,” such as cadmium, lead, and mercury.

Consumers should visit the DEP website at http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/electronics_recycling_management_program/20342/electronics_recycling_programs/980755 for information on where to find retailer, manufacturer, county, and other e-waste drop-off sites and collection programs. Consumers also should check with the municipality where they live to find out if there is a special collection program for electronics.

“We have the rest of this year to get ready, and our member companies want to get the message out to their municipal trash-collection customers so they understand what’s coming and are aware that e-waste soon will be banned from landfills and will have to be recycled through an approved program,” O’Donnell said.

O’Donnell promised that Pennsylvania’s waste industry—of which recycling is a large and important segment—is ready to do its part to work with DEP to make sure the transition goes smoothly.

PWIA represents private-sector waste haulers, recyclers, and landfill operators and is the Pennsylvania state chapter of the National Solid Wastes Management Association.

For general information about the new law, go to the DEP website at http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/electronics_recycling_management_program/20342.

For more information about PWIA visit the PWIA website at www.pawasteindustries.org.

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