

Resolution #2025-03

A resolution supporting a Statewide Electronics Product Stewardship Program.

WHEREAS, waste management is an essential government service provided by local governments to protect public health, control blight, and provide quality of life; and

WHEREAS, Alaskans generate over 15 million pounds annually of spent electronics that require expensive and specialized waste management resources and incur a significant future municipal cost through hastened need for capital funding of landfill closure and new site planning; and

WHEREAS, electronics contain toxic chemicals harmful to human health and subsistence resources, such as lead, cadmium, mercury, flame retardants, and PFAS, and these chemicals leach out as the landfilled electronics age, potentially flowing to nearby land, creeks, ponds, rivers, and bays that provide drinking water and important subsistence resources; and

WHEREAS, Class II and III rural landfills serve a third of all Alaskans, are unique to Alaska due to engineering and economy of scale considerations and are not designed to contain this leachate; and

WHEREAS, at least 150 communities are within one mile of their Class III landfill, where burning waste in passive steel containers called burnboxes is a common least-cost waste management strategy through which residents can be exposed to product chemicals; and

WHEREAS, electronics are proposed to be listed as a hazardous waste under the pending State of Alaska Hazardous Waste Program, potentially increasing the cost of electronics disposal; and

WHEREAS, 27 states have Product Stewardship laws that result in electronics manufacturers paying for all or part of their state's electronics recycling with residents in those states experiencing no associated increase in the cost for their electronics; and

WHEREAS, a Statewide Electronics Product Stewardship Program can be implemented without the levy of fees, taxes, or Alaska retail business burden; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska can develop a Product Stewardship program without administrative cost to the State, and municipalities are not beholden to participate in, or administer, the Program.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports a comprehensive statewide Product Stewardship Program for electronic recycling to substantially reduce local and regional government waste management costs as well as public health risks to their constituency.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 13, 2024.



ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES
2023 ANNUAL CONVENTION
RESOLUTION 23-19

- TITLE:** SUPPORTING PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP LEGISLATION FOR ELECTRONICS RECYCLING AND REMOVAL FROM COMMUNITY LANDFILLS
- WHEREAS:** The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) is the largest statewide Native organization in Alaska, and its membership includes 179 federally recognized tribes, 154 village corporations, 9 regional corporations, and 10 regional nonprofit and tribal consortiums that contract and compact to run federal and state programs; and
- WHEREAS:** The mission of AFN is to enhance and promote the cultural, economic, and political voice of the entire Alaska Native community; and
- WHEREAS:** The proliferation of electronic devices in our society has led to a significant increase in electronic waste (e-waste), posing a growing environmental and public health concern; and
- WHEREAS:** E-waste contains hazardous materials such as lead, mercury, and cadmium that can leach into soil and water sources, and emit into the air when burned, posing a serious threat to the environment and public health when improperly disposed of; and
- WHEREAS:** The heavy plastic encasing electronics, when crushed and burned in landfills, emit cancer-causing dioxins into the air, posing a serious threat to public health and the environment; and
- WHEREAS:** Most rural Alaska Native communities have smaller, Class III landfills, which are unlined, unregulated, and burn trash to reduce mass, therefore allowing more of the harmful electronic toxins into the environment when crushed and burned; and
- WHEREAS:** The safe and responsible management of electronics is essential to protect our environment, conserve valuable resources, and reduce the carbon footprint associated with electronic products; and
- WHEREAS:** 25 other states and many other countries have recognized the importance of addressing e-waste through the implementation of product stewardship programs, which shift the responsibility for the proper recycling and end-disposal of e-waste from consumers to the manufacturers of electronic devices; and
- WHEREAS:** Product stewardship legislation for electronics has proven to be an effective and sustainable approach in over 25 states, helping to divert e-waste from landfills,

promote recycling, and reduce the harmful environmental impacts associated with improper disposal; and

WHEREAS: By introducing product stewardship legislation for e-waste, communities can incentivize manufacturers to design products with greater consideration for their end-of-life management, encourage the responsible recycling and disposal of e-waste, and reduce the financial burden on local governments and taxpayers for e-waste management.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that delegates of the 2023 Annual Convention of the Alaska Federation of Natives urge the Alaska State Legislature to introduce and pass comprehensive product stewardship legislation for e-waste in Alaska; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the delegates of the 2023 Annual Convention of the Alaska Federation of Natives request the AFN Legislative and Litigation Committee assist in drafting product steward legislation that is specific to rural Alaska to ensure that manufacturers' responsibility for the collection and proper recycling and disposal of their electronic products is not passed on to communities and that this legislation require and promote public awareness and education about the importance of recycling e-waste.

SUBMITTED BY: THE AFN COUNCIL FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF ALASKA NATIVES

COMMITTEE ACTION: DO PASS

BOARD ACTION: DO PASS

CONVENTION ACTION: ADOPTED ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2023

**Alaska Chapter SWANA
Resolution 2023-01**

**Supporting the Concept of a
Statewide Electronics Product Stewardship Program**

Whereas, solid waste management is an essential public service that protects human health and the environment, and municipalities around the state providing this service are facing budget deficits.

Whereas, the estimated 3 million pounds of electronic wastes that Alaskans discard annually contribute to deficits through requiring specialized management and/or hastening the need for landfill closure and new landfill construction.

Whereas, electronics contain toxic chemicals harmful to human health and subsistence resources, such as heavy metals and these chemicals leach out of landfilled electronics, and may eventually enter groundwater or ocean waters.

Whereas, due to engineering and economy of scale considerations, rural and hub landfills, serving about one-third of all Alaskans, are under regulations unique to Alaska and are not designed to contain or treat this leachate, engendering an immediate potential for chemicals to enter nearby lands and waters that may be used for subsistence or household drinking water.

Whereas, regional landfills with leachate collection systems in Alaska's urban areas are under increasing pressure to meet stringent leachate pretreatment and discharge permit requirements.

Whereas, scientific studies have found that landfill workers are at increased health risk due to exposure to heavy metals associated with landfill particulate matter and electronics are a significant source of these metals.

Whereas, at least 30 rural landfills are within 100 feet of a primary water body and about three-quarters are within one mile of homes, and these landfills are often not consolidated or covered, and commonly use burning without emissions treatment to manage waste streams, residents can potentially be exposed to product chemicals that cause health impacts.

Whereas, recycling electronics results in these chemicals being used instead to make new products, and 27 states use Product Stewardship laws that result in electronic manufacturers paying all or part of their recycling costs without an associated increase in the price paid for electronics in those states because the recycling costs are recouped via market sales globally.

Whereas a program can be developed in Alaska that does not tax or charge users, and does not emplace an administrative burden on Alaska retailers.

Whereas Alaska residents also deserve to benefit from a shared disposal cost set by the market, and increased recycling and backhaul opportunities can create local jobs and revenue for the municipalities, recyclers, and the transportation industry.

Now, therefore be it resolved, that the Alaska Chapter of SWANA supports the concept of a Statewide Electronics Product Stewardship Program to reduce public health risks, and reduce local government budget deficits, with the understanding that support of a specific bill will require review of final language.

APPROVED BY THE ALASKA CHAPTER OF SWANA ON THE 20th DAY OF JANUARY 2023.

Passed via motion/membership vote at annual meeting on January 20, 2023