



Solid Waste and Recycling Advisory Commission

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Honorable Alaska Senate & House Representatives,

The Solid Waste & Recycling Advisory Commission is an appointed body charged with advising the Municipality of Anchorage in waste management issues. Working alongside and with the staff support of Solid Waste Services, the Commission's focus is to ensure that the Municipality's waste policies are financially sound, environmentally sustainable, and protective of its citizens. A primary challenge for Anchorage in meeting this goal is the management of spent electronics.

- Electronics contain toxic chemicals such as lead, cadmium, mercury, phthalates, and PFAS that can cause cancer, developmental delays, lowered I.Q. score, reproductive problems, and impact people as well as Alaska's subsistence resources.
- Electronics often contain lithium batteries which can explode and have caused multiple destructive fires in the United States that resulted in loss of infrastructure and human life.
- Electronics present an increased liability risk also due to potential pollution caused by the current discharge of the municipality's treated leachate into Cook Inlet and the increasing potential for leachate release due to the expected reduced integrity of an aging landfill liner.
- Electronics further provide negligible BTU value and may initiate emission concerns because of the toxic content. Thus, they present an operational issue and associated cost in our current planning for a Waste to Energy facility that can largely replace the need for a landfill.
- A large portion of Superfund sites, which are the Nation's most polluted lands, are old municipal landfills.

Thus, electronics do not belong in the Anchorage Landfill, or any of Alaska's landfills. But the overall management and transport to the Lower-48 for recycling is costly at a time when the municipality faces difficult budget decisions about important programs, including the reduction of school educational offerings and implementation of school closures. The Municipality currently accepts dropped-off electronics from residents for a fee of \$30 to \$35 per item. The collection, packaging, transport, and recycling of these electronics are contracted. The fee along with limited locations and hours is inconvenient and may strain family finances. It is likely therefore we are not capturing the full wastestream. While some electronics are collected offsite, some balance of electronics are discarded, hidden, at the landfill or perhaps stored in resident homes, presenting a fire danger with aging lithium batteries. Because of this, it is the intent of the Municipality to stage two electronic collection events in 2025, at unknown but significant cost.

Senate Bill 61 would deliver a solution, termed "product stewardship", that is employed already by 27 other U.S. states and multiple foreign countries. This Bill would require manufacturers to pay for the collection and recycling of our electronic waste, such as T.V.s, computers, laptops, and game consoles. Anchorage residents, small businesses, and schools would receive free recycling, and would be able to drop off their electronics at any time at ten different locations throughout our large land base.

Page 2, SWRAC Support Letter – SB 61 Electronics Product Stewardship

This Bill presents no cost to the state because the full program is paid for by Manufacturer's registration fees. Even program startup costs can be recouped. As such, the Bill is an excellent investment opportunity for the State. As an example, Hawaii, which must also backhaul to the Lower-48, already has an electronic product stewardship program that makes manufacturers fully responsible for the cost of collection, transportation, and recycling. Hawaii's program, which also requires just one position, brings approximately \$250,000 in revenue from manufacturer registration fees at \$5,000 per manufacturer. With the manufacturers covering collection and disposal, Hawaii's law enabled the State to shift from partially subsidizing counties, at a deficit, for the high cost of electronics collection to sustainably supporting their counties' waste outreach and education efforts.


We understand that, to date there has been no documented evidence to suggest that an electronics product stewardship law in any U.S. state resulted in a price increase to that state's consumers. This process is not new to manufacturers, and the Bill's 4-year planning horizon prior to program startup will provide sufficient planning time, as electronics backhaul is practiced throughout both urban and rural Alaska already. Infrastructure and knowledge exist but the resources to support regular backhaul of the full volume of spent electronics do not.


There are no losers in this Bill. It will not only help protect our children's future health, but it will reduce the Municipality's cost and the State's cost in managing electronics. By increasing revenue for our recycling and transporter businesses, it will create Alaskan jobs. And by reducing costs for our schools and small businesses, it will result in job retention. Manufacturers on the other hand are able to recover their cost via the Market -- through instituting internal efficiencies and/or by spreading the differential over their entire global marketplace. As a result, when Alaskans purchase electronics, they are helping to cover the cost of safe computer and phone disposal in many foreign countries as well as the other U.S. states with longstanding electronics stewardship laws, whether it is Hawaii, New York or Texas. We believe that Anchorage and all Alaskans should be able to benefit from this model as well.


In closing, the Commission is highly supportive of the Bill, having reviewed its merits at both our February and March regular monthly meetings. *We however recommend an amendment to the Bill in the membership of the Advisory Council.* While we applaud the inclusion of municipalities larger than 25,000 persons, we point out that Anchorage has a much more sizeable population, with a greater degree of urban environment, presenting a unique class of circumstances other jurisdictions do not face, even those with Class I Landfills. Further, Anchorage is a major port city and will be key to garnering efficiencies in any Producer Responsibility Organization's plan. We therefore respectfully request that a seat on the Council be reserved for the Municipality.

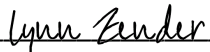
You may direct any questions for the Commission to SWRAC@anchorageak.gov . Thank you for your consideration in passing this landmark bill.

Duly authorized by the Municipality of Anchorage Solid Waste and Recycling Advisory Commission:


 Dr. Osama Abaza


 Patrick Simpson


 Greg Beltz


 Dr. Lynn Zender