

5/14/09

- Good morning, Chairman Straus and Chairman Petrucci. Thank you for taking me out of order. I am here to testify in favor of my e-waste legislation and I will do my best to be brief.
- This bill is simple: it requires the producers of electronic waste to pay for the responsible recycling of the products they make.
- No matter what you may hear today, e-waste is a real problem.
- It is the fastest growing portion of the municipal solid waste stream in Massachusetts and contains toxic materials like lead, cadmium, mercury and beryllium. These materials leach out of landfills and into the environment.
- Right now, there is a patchwork system of e-waste disposal in the Commonwealth. Some consumers have curbside service and pay no fees; but most consumers must take their old electronics to the transfer station and pay 5 to 35 dollars to get rid of it. 111 communities have no municipal service at all and residents must drive it to a private company, like Staples, Best Buy or Office Depot, that will take it for a fee of 10 dollars or more.
- For most Massachusetts consumers, getting rid of e-waste is a hassle. They have to figure out where to take it, bring money to pay the fee to get rid of it and drive it to a location for drop-off. Most of the private drop-off centers and even many of the municipal programs place restrictions on the quantity, size, and type of products accepted. This makes it difficult and even impossible to properly recycle certain items.
- For consumers who enjoy the convenience of free curb-side pick-up – like Boston, or Brookline – the cost is absorbed by the municipal budget, to the tune of \$200,000 per year in Boston alone.
- The result of the current system is what you would expect: Massachusetts recycles only 20% of its electronic waste. The rest – 80% -- goes into the landfill,

sits in basements and attics, is shipped illegally to developing countries, and gets dumped illegally.

- This legislation changes the incentives that make our current e-waste system inefficient, costly to consumers and municipalities, and largely ineffective.
- First, it pays municipalities to collect e-waste. This will encourage municipalities that do not offer e-waste collection to their residents to provide the service. For communities that currently charge for e-waste disposal, it will replace the revenue stream that they currently receive in fees from residents with a reliable revenue stream. For municipalities that assume all the financial burden of disposing of e-waste, it will permanently remove that cost from the municipal budget.
- Second, it mandates free disposal for consumers. This will prevent illegal dumping, keep toxic chemicals out of the waste stream, and encourage people to recycle the e-waste that's currently in their attics and basements.
- Finally, the legislation builds on the well-established recycling infrastructure in Massachusetts. This will maximize efficiency in the system and keep administrative costs low for DEP.
- There are many companies – several are here today – Apple, Dell, Sony – that take responsibility for managing their end of life electronics and should be commended for their product stewardship efforts. This bill should not affect companies that are already doing their share and managing their products responsibly.
- Instead, it will even the playing field, by requiring companies that do not offer recycling to pitch into the system. These companies do not deserve to get this free ride on the backs of municipalities, consumers and other environmentally responsible companies.
- I look forward to working with you on this bill and hope that it can be reported out of committee quickly. Thank you for your attention.