

E-Waste Presentation

Issue: Proper disposal and recycling of electronic waste

Desired Outcomes:

1. Interim study to examine possible program/process options to address the issue.
2. Establish a statewide e-waste program that is sustainable financially for the long-term.

Background: E-waste, or electronic waste, refers to discarded electronic devices such as computers, smartphones, tablets, televisions, and other electronic appliances that have reached the end of their useful life. These devices often contain hazardous materials like lead, mercury, cadmium, and flame retardants, which can pose significant environmental and health risks if not properly managed.

The proliferation of electronic devices and rapid technological advancements have led to a surge in e-waste generation globally. Unfortunately, much of this e-waste ends up in landfills or is illegally exported to developing countries, where it is often dismantled under unsafe conditions, releasing toxins into the environment and endangering the health of workers and nearby communities.

Also, E-waste poses several fire hazards due to the presence of potentially flammable materials, such as plastics and lithium-ion batteries, as well as the risk of electrical fires. Many electronic devices, including smartphones, laptops, and rechargeable batteries, contain lithium-ion batteries. When damaged or improperly handled, these batteries can short-circuit, overheat, and catch fire or explode. This can occur during the disposal or recycling process if batteries are crushed, punctured, or exposed to excessive heat. Efforts to address the e-waste problem include legislation and regulations aimed at promoting responsible recycling and disposal practices, as well as initiatives to raise awareness about the environmental and social impacts of e-waste. Recycling e-waste not only helps prevent pollution and conserve resources but also allows for the recovery of valuable materials like gold, silver, copper, and palladium, which can be reused in the manufacturing of new electronic products.

Facts: In 2023 more than 1,000,000 pounds of e-waste product was collected by the various solid waste entities in the state. See the attached Exhibit A for where the e-waste was collected.

Approximately 15 years ago, legislation was proposed to help pay for the costs of e-waste recycling. The industry opposed this legislation. However, to their credit, two companies, HP, and Samsung, have provided funds to Salt Lake County and Davis/Morgan Counties to help defray the costs to recycle these materials for more than ten years. However, this method to finance these costs is not sustainable long-term as one company has stopped contributing funds. This method also does not have a statewide benefit.

Costs Incurred to Recycle: the costs incurred to recycle this material are (1) the cost of handling the material at the transfer station or landfill, the cost of transportation to the actual recycler, and the recycling costs the recycler charges to process the materials.

Supporters of Desired Outcomes: Supporters of the proposal include all the landfills and transfer stations along the Wasatch front. These institutions collect approximately 80% of the e-waste. See attached Exhibit B.

SWANA (Solid Waste Association of North America), the professional association of the waste industry including waste haulers and private landfill owners and operators.

The electronic industry is sympathetic to the issue but has not been able to help come to a mutually satisfactory process with the waste industry.

Possible Solutions

1. Product Fees or advanced Recycling Fees
 1. Consumers may pay an upfront fee when purchasing electronic devices. These fees are intended to cover the cost of recycling and disposal at the end of the product's life. The collected fees are often managed by government agencies or industry organizations responsible for e-waste management. Several States have advanced fees for e-waste.
2. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Programs:
 - a. EPR programs place the financial responsibility for managing and recycling electronic products on the manufacturers. Companies that produce electronic devices are required to take back and recycle a certain percentage of the products they sell. They may cover the costs of recycling through internal funds or by passing them on to consumers through product pricing. Several states have adopted an EPR program.
3. Government Funding:
 - a. In some cases, government agencies allocate funds to support e-waste recycling programs. These funds may come from general taxation or specific environmental levies. Governments may also provide grants or subsidies to support the development of e-waste recycling infrastructure and technologies.
4. Fees charged at the various solid waste facilities:
 - a. Solid Waste Entities can charge an additional fee on electronic waste and use that fee to recycle the material. Unfortunately, this option leads to a lot of e-waste being discarded into the regular waste stream so that the additional fee can be avoided.
5. Electronic Producers fund specific programs:

- a. E-waste producers fund specific programs to recycle e-waste for specific geographic locations. This is the type of funding described above that HP and Samsung have been providing for Morgan/Davis and Salt Lake Counties.

EXHIBIT A

Utah E-Waste Data Collection		
E-waste Collection 2023		
Landfill or City	Pounds of E-waste	Tons of E-waste
Bountiful	22,800	11.4
Cache County	82,631	41.3155
Davis County, Wasatch Integrated	102,460	51.23
Salt Lake County Landfill	154,710	77.35499
Trans Jordan Landfill	277,240	138.62
Utah County, North Point	77,340	38.67
Washington County	112,726	56.363
Weber County	27.56	13.78
Total e-waste collected	829,935	428.73

EXHIBIT B



www.utahswana.org

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June 5, 2023

Re: State of Utah E-Waste Problem

To Whom It May Concern:

The Utah Chapter of SWANA (Solid Waste Association of North America) is giving a formal endorsement of legislation to address the Electronic Waste (E-Waste) problem in our State.

E-Waste contains batteries that cause fires at both waste transfer stations and landfills. In addition, E-Waste contains heavy metals that should not be landfilled. Diversion of E-Waste addresses these safety and environmental issues and capitalizes on the opportunity to recover and recycle resources.

E-Waste diversion programs across the Wasatch Front have historically been funded by E-Waste producers. The funding for these programs has been discontinued, prompting the need for state-supported solutions. Although these previous arrangements benefited some entities located along the Wasatch Front, they fell short of providing a solution that could help more universally across all solid waste facilities in Utah. We represent entities throughout the entire State that struggle with this problem and need to be included in a long-term solution.

Since the previous arrangement for E-Waste diversion was not statewide or permanent, the cost of diverting this waste stream is now placed entirely on solid waste agencies, without any assistance from producers.

To summarize, we appeal to the Utah State Legislature to address this issue with legislation which:

1. Represents the entire State and is easily accessible to all, especially those not in highly populated areas;
2. Provides a permanent funding source;
3. Is a long-term solution for this waste stream.

We support efforts to create solutions for this problem and are excited to see the issue addressed by the legislature.

Sincerely,
SWANA Utah Beehive Chapter Board of Directors

Gordon Jones, President

Neil Schwendiman, Vice President

Nick Patterson, Secretary

Brenda Bingham, Treasurer

Preston Lee, International Director

Jesse Simonsen, Public Sector Director

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May 8, 2023

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