



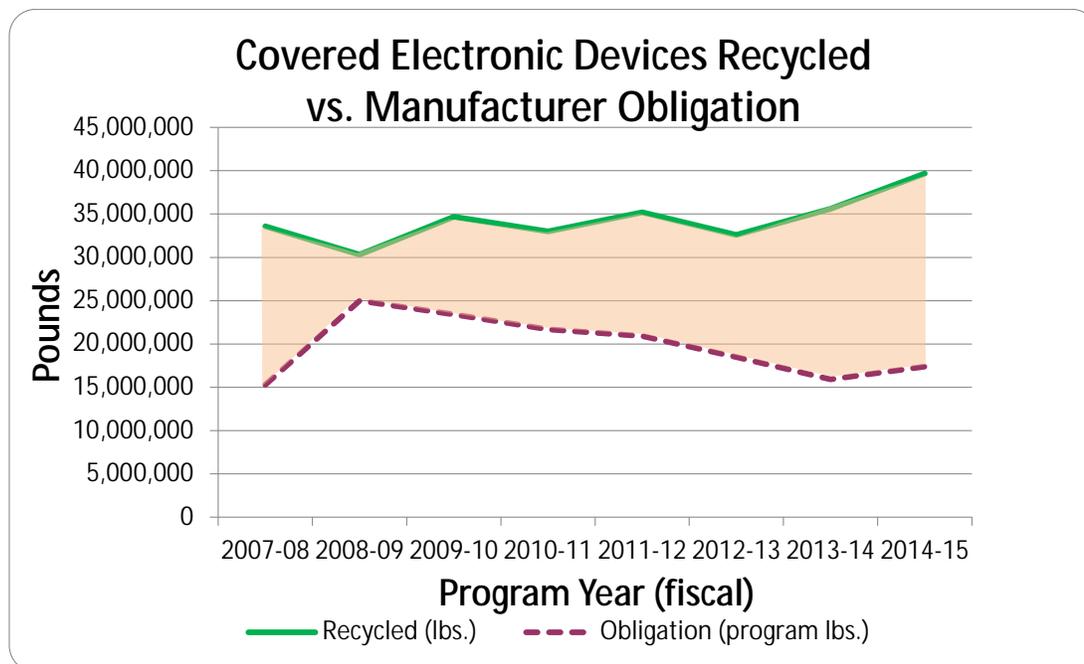
Proposal: Modify the Electronics Recycling Act

HF1412/SF1427

What's the issue?

The 2007 Minnesota Electronics Recycling Act was passed to increase electronics recycling by creating more collection opportunities, and to reduce recycling costs to consumers and counties. The law requires manufacturers of video display devices (VDDs), such as household televisions, monitors, and laptops, to collect and recycle 80% (by weight) of these products sold in Minnesota. But the law is not functioning as intended.

While electronics recycling and collection options have increased since the law took effect, some parts of the state are not being adequately served. Consumers and counties are covering far more recycling costs than the law intended, because the amount of recycled materials being collected far exceeds the amount that manufacturers are obliged to collect. The result is consumers must pay "end-of-life" fees if they want to recycle televisions, monitors, and laptops, and counties must scramble to cover the costs, often using property taxes or revenue from solid waste fees.



What we propose and how it will help

- Determine manufacturers' recycling obligations by weight of VDDs recycled in previous years, instead of by weight of VDDs sold.**

Newer VDDs are lighter than the older, heavier devices that are still being collected, so the amount of materials manufacturers must take back is declining compared to the amount being collected for recycling. Consumers and counties are picking up the expenses of the widening gap. Changing the obligation-setting mechanism from a percentage of sales to a percentage of the amount collected would bring the manufacturer requirements closer to the level originally intended.

2. Require manufacturers to cover the full cost of transporting and recycling collected VDDs.

The gap between manufacturer recycling obligations and the amount of recycling actually collected means manufacturers don't have to pay the full cost of managing their electronic waste. Explicitly requiring manufacturers to pay for transporting VDDs to a recycler and recycling them will relieve much of the financial burden on counties and residents. VDDs account for the vast majority of household electronic waste and are the most expensive type of electronics to recycle without damaging the environment.

3. Reduce the manufacturer's VDD screen size requirement.

Currently, manufacturers are only obliged to recycle devices if they sell VDDs with screens larger than nine inches. Since the law took effect, tablet computers have become pervasive. Reducing the screen-size requirement to seven inches or greater would require more VDD manufacturers to do their fair share of recycling, and would be in line with other states' screen-size requirements.



Abandoned electronic waste found in Minnesota.

4. Eliminate the registration fee for new manufacturers with annual sales in Minnesota of 100 or fewer devices.

Currently, all manufacturers of VDDs are required to pay a registration fee: \$1,250 for new manufacturers selling fewer than 100 devices a year in Minnesota, or \$2,500 for those who sell at least 100 devices a year. For some smaller manufacturers or those with just an online presence, \$1,250 can be a barrier to doing business in the state. Removing the lower fee will remove the barrier while retaining the manufacturers' recycling obligations.

5. Require environmental certification for recyclers in the program.

The recyclers managing the majority of electronic waste are certified to an environmentally sound management standard (e.g., R2 or e-Stewards). Requiring certification ensures all electronic waste that fulfills manufacturer obligation in the program is managed with the highest environmental standards. Moving towards an industry standard may decrease the need for further regulatory efforts and save state dollars in the future.

Contact

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