

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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COMMISSIONER MARTIN REMINDS RESIDENTS THAT COMPUTERS AND TVS MUST BE RECYCLED STARTING JANUARY 1ST 2011.

(10/P148) TRENTON - Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin today reminded New Jersey residents that old TVs, computers and computer monitors - items known collectively as electronic waste, or e-waste - must be recycled as of the beginning of the new year, as required by the Electronic Waste Management Act.

"We expect a smooth transition thanks to the work of municipalities, counties and manufacturers who have been cooperating closely with the DEP to coordinate their efforts," Commissioner Martin said. "Everyone has been working hard to make sure residents will have ample opportunities for recycling their electronic waste."

The Electronic Waste Management Act bans the disposal of televisions and all personal or portable computers - including desktop, notebook and laptop computers, as well as computer monitors - in the regular waste stream beginning Jan. 1, 2011. Manufacturers of these devices will now be funding the collection of e-waste so that it is free for consumers.

The new law means residents can no longer put TVs, computers and monitors out on the curb for pickup under regular solid waste collection programs. Many residents will have to take these items to a drop-off point, such as a county or municipal solid waste collection center or a participating electronics retail store. Some municipalities already conduct special curbside pickup programs for recycling of e-waste and are expected to continue doing this.

All 21 counties and many municipalities already have e-waste recycling programs in place. These include special collection events and drop-off points. Best Buy stores and community-based service programs, most notably Goodwill Industries and the Salvation Army, also accept these materials. In many cases, manufacturers will simply pick up the cost of operating these existing programs.

Residents should contact their county solid waste agency or municipal recycling coordinator for e-waste recycling options currently available in their communities. These options will continue to grow in the coming year. The DEP also is compiling a resource list to assist residents in finding collection points. A working draft of the list is available at www.recyclenj.org

"We still have some work to do," Commissioner Martin said. "Over the next several months, the Electronic Waste Management Act will help us fill in gaps to ensure that all covered waste is recycled and that everyone has convenient options. Equally important, this law raises public awareness about the importance of recycling these materials."

Electronic waste makes up about two percent of the solid waste disposed in New Jersey. Because of the high consumer demand for new technologies, electronic waste is also growing two to three times faster than any other component of the solid waste stream, according to the federal Environmental Protection Agency. TVs, computers and computer monitors contain lead, mercury, cadmium and other toxins.

Cathode Ray Tubes, or CRTs, in particular contain large amounts of lead that is used to shield consumers from radiation.

The DEP estimates that the program will prevent 50 million pounds of electronic waste from being sent to solid waste facilities during its first year. The law also contains strict provisions to ensure that, once collected, the materials are recycled properly and in accordance with state and federal laws. Manufacturers must ensure that these devices are not exported for disposal in a manner that poses a risk to public health or the environment.

Manufacturers must be properly registered with the DEP and participating in the program in order to sell covered devices in New Jersey. Most manufacturers have already registered and full compliance is expected.

The DEP is currently developing rules establishing methodologies for determining market shares for television manufacturers and return shares based on weight for other covered electronic devices for the purposes of apportioning responsibility for program costs among manufacturers. The development of these rules does not affect the ongoing establishment of collection programs.

The Electronic Waste Management Act does not cover cell phones, DVD players, VCRs, game consoles, or other electronic devices, although some retailers and service organizations provide opportunities for recycling these items.