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CHAPTER

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Electronics Waste Producer Responsibility Bill

Formal Title: An Act relative to information technology producer responsibility

Sponsors: Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture

Bill Number: S.2078

The Problem: Electronics are toxic for the environment and expensive for cities and towns to recycle.

- Massachusetts cities and towns need relief from the costs of recycling electronics. They spend millions on computers and TVs alone. TVs: Boston-\$250,000, Worcester-\$25,000, Holyoke-\$8,450.
- Cathode Ray Tubes (TVs & computer monitors) contain 4-8 pounds of lead each and are illegal to put into the trash—but people still throw them away.
- MassDEP data indicates that roughly 70,000 tons of these banned materials—much of which is reusable or recyclable—end up in municipal solid waste. That's 140 million pounds of lost resources that municipalities are paying to dispose of – a double waste.
- Electronics are expensive to recycle because they have toxic components and are designed to become obsolete in a short time.
- Brand owners have no incentive to make their products easy to repair and recycle.
- Recycling fees and lack of convenient drop-off sites discourage recycling.

The Solution: Shift associated costs from taxpayers to brand owners and increase reuse and recycling.

- Ensure that the bill is based on Extended Producer Responsibility principals so:
 - The cost of collection, transportation and processing of covered material is shifted from municipalities to producers. As written, S.2078 requires producers to cover the cost of processing only, leaving municipalities and taxpayers still holding the e-waste trash bag.
 - Producers have a financial incentive to re-design their products to be less toxic, more durable, and easier to recycle. Paying for the costs of collection, transportation and processing of e-waste gives producers a strong incentive to redesign their products for less waste and less to no toxicity.
- Establish collection targets that raise the bar higher than per capita amounts currently collected. As written, S. 2078 has per capita collection amounts that are significantly lower

than what is currently collected. Once producers reach their designated collection amounts, they could stop collecting and leave the rest for municipalities to deal with.

- Establish convenience standards that make drop-off of covered products free and easily accessible. Massachusetts currently has 253 collection events (curbside, drop-off, annual events, etc.). As written, S.2078 would decrease the number of events to 29. If it's not easy to drop off discarded electronics, consumers won't drop them off. We have a drop-off infrastructure already in place. Let's use it and improve it!

Who supports EPR for electronic waste?

- The City Councils and Boards of Selectmen of 180 Massachusetts cities and towns—over 50% of the 351 cities & towns—have passed Resolutions supporting EPR based e-waste legislation.

- Twenty- three other states have already passed e-waste EPR bills—Massachusetts and New Hampshire are the only New England states that are not holding producers responsible.

- Computer manufacturers Hewlett Packard (HP), Apple, and Dell, the Consumer Electronics Retailers Coalition and the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries (ISRI) support mandatory, producer responsibility state legislation.