

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

Resolution Re-Adopted July 28, 2009

## Resolution in Support of Electronic Waste Recycling

**Issue:** Recycling of electronic waste products.

**Proposed policy:** NACo supports maximizing the recycling of electronic waste - including computers, televisions, and other electronic devices - that has reached the end of its useful life through an internalized electronics industry financing mechanism that covers the cost of collection, transportation, and recycling, and does not rely on state and local government funding.

**Background:** Electronic products are an important component of everyday life. When they are not longer useful, however, they pose challenges for consumers, governments, and others along the product chain.

Electronic products may contain lead, mercury and other harmful substances that, if not managed properly, pose a threat to human health and the environment. The collection and recycling of waste electronics promotes resource conservation, saves energy and creates economic development opportunities. Local governments are facing increased volumes of discarded electronic products and this is expected to continue, particularly with the transition of analog televisions signals to digital transmission slated for February 2009. It is expected that between 30 million and 80 million televisions will be impacted by the transition.

The costs to consumers and state and local governments to collect and recycle waste electronics are increasing, and it has become necessary to establish a system whereby manufacturers are engaged in the collection and recycling of waste electronics. For example, Hennepin County, Minnesota spends nearly \$2 million annually to manage their collection program for discarded products from households.

The states of California, Maine, Maryland, Washington, Minnesota, Oregon, Texas and Connecticut have adopted electronic waste legislation, and other states have legislation under consideration. A federal approach is to be encouraged to promote consistency and address certain issues of managing discarded electronics that are more effectively addressed nationally. However, federal legislation should embrace a comprehensive approach for a wide scope of products and importantly, not preempt existing or future state or local programs to collect and recycle discarded electronic products.

**Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** Passage of legislation to increase recycling of consumer electronic waste will have positive impacts on the environment, and should be conducted in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders through development of an internalized electronics industry financing mechanism that does not rely on government funding.

Submitted by: Commissioner Victoria A. Reinhardt, Ramsey County, Minnesota