



What a Waste! Congress, Industry Consider Disposal Practices

By Mike Buetow
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WASHINGTON -- The Congressional E-Waste Working Group today brought together the nation's largest e-waste stakeholders in hopes of developing a solution to disposing of the 100 million electronics devices that are rendered obsolete each year.

The participants -- electronics manufacturers and retailers, recyclers, environmental groups and state officials -- discussed what role the federal government can play to mitigate e-waste's effects and how to distribute responsibility for disposal.

The Working Group, a bipartisan effort, was formed in 2005 to explore options to the problem of e-waste.

In a statement, member Rep. Mike Thompson said, "Rather than having a patchwork of state regulations and individual company policies, a federal solution may be a more effective approach."

Added Rep. Louise Slaughter, "We're coming together to produce clear and consistent e-waste guidelines. Developing a national plan is critical if we want to protect our environment and the vitality of electronics manufacturers. If we don't respond to e-waste now, U.S. businesses will be put at a competitive disadvantage, while the consequences to the environment will grow more severe."

The Government Accountability Office estimates that 100 million electronic devices become obsolete each year. E-waste now accounts for more than 40% of the lead and 70% of the metals in U.S. landfills, the Working Group said.

Represented at today's meeting was **Best Buy, Consumer Electronic Association, Consumer Electronics Retailers Coalition, Dell, Electronic Industries Alliance, Electronic Waste Recycling Program - California, Goodwill Industries, H-P, IBM, International Scrap Recycling, Kodak, National Recycling Coalition, Panasonic, Product Stewardship Institute, Washington State Department of Ecology, Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition, Sony Electronics and CTIA, The Wireless Association.**