

# Minn. officials say state will meet e-scrap goal

By Joe Truini

BOSTON — Data is starting to trickle in from one of the nation's most demanding electronic scrap recycling mandates, and manufacturers seem to be up to the task.

Minnesota's first electronic scrap report deadline is Aug. 1, but the state has informally surveyed 11 collectors throughout the state, said Garth Hickle, product stewardship team leader for the state's Pollution Control Agency.

Over the last 11 months, those collectors took in 18 million pounds of electronic scrap, 3.2 pounds per capita. The state will meet its collection goals this year, Hickle said.

"Clearly, aggressive collection and recycling rates are not intimidating the manufacturers, who've stepped up and responded reasonably well in terms of setting up collection infrastructure and partnering with recyclers, and we will certainly exceed the collection goals that are laid out in the statute for this year," he said.

The bill signed last year by Gov. Tim Pawlenty not only makes manufacturers responsible for the recovery and recycling of electronics in the state, but it also requires them to collect 60 percent of the weight during the first year of the program, based on the amount they sold the previous year. After the first year, the law requires them to collect 80 percent.

Thirteen states and New York City have passed mandatory electronic waste collection and recovery bills. Only two, Minnesota and New York City, spell out performance goals and penalize manufacturers for not meeting them. Electronic scrap legislation also is pending governors' signatures in Hawaii and Missouri.

But computer makers are making their presence felt during state electronic waste

legislation discussions to the point that they now have models named after them.

Dell Inc., the Round Rock, Texas-based computer giant, has been very visible with regard to electronic product stewardship and its take-back and recycling program. Dell has been considered by most as one of the most environmentally progressive companies in the industry.

But it appears Dell is drawing backlash over lobbying its version of electronic scrap legislation, labeled by some as the Dell bill.

The Dell bill requires computer makers to offer a take-back program for their products. But that's not good enough, said Barbara Kyle, national coordinator for the Electronics TakeBack Coalition.

Dell's version lacks performance measures and specific goals to hold computer makers accountable, she said.

So-called Dell bill states include Texas, Oklahoma, Virginia and Missouri, Kyle said.

Only about 12.5 percent of electronic waste is recycled, and Dell's version won't do much to change that number, Kyle said.

"If we don't have goals, this is never going to happen," she said. "It might be a way to get people talking about and understanding it, but it doesn't seem like it gets into the level of detail that you want your legislators to understand to really grapple with the issues here."

Oklahoma Gov. Brad Henry signed a form of the Dell-favored bill May 13, and the state sees it as a good first step toward addressing electronics recycling in a state where residents don't like mandates, said Fenton Rood, director of waste systems planning for the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality. ■

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