

Green

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Today's News:

DIMINISHED 2009 E-WASTE ACTIVITY in state legislatures due to budget, financial pressures, say representatives of state agencies, legislators. More states expected to act in 2010, they say. (P. 1)

E-WASTE: Copper smelter LS-Nikko invests undisclosed amount in Electronic Recyclers International to mine e-waste for precious metals. (P. 2)

FEDERAL ACTIONS: EPA says two chemical companies and importer are phasing out flame retardant decaBDE used in consumer products including TVs, other electronics. (P. 2)

GREEN NOTES: Smart grid should be part of climate change debate, says Speaker Pelosi. (P. 3)

More to Act in 2010

2009 Slowdown in State E-Waste Activity Attributed to Economic Woes

The slowdown in e-waste legislative activity in states in 2009 was due in large part to the budget situation and not because of any waning of interest in addressing the e-waste issue, said representatives of state legislatures and state agencies. Only two states passed e-waste legislation this year, compared with four in 2007 and nine in 2008. Twenty states and New York City now have e-waste laws. The "economy and state budgets came in as a high priority" for legislators in 2009, said Adam Schafer, executive director of the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators. But Schafer sees "momentum" for e-waste in state legislators going into 2010, he said.

Any slowdown in 2009 is "due to states not having resources to spend time on [e-waste] legislation or implementing the law," said Scott Cassel, executive director of the Product Stewardship Institute. "States are focused on finances right now. That doesn't mean that they don't want e-waste legislation." States with "weak" e-waste laws want stronger ones, he said, and those with no laws "still want legislation." The institute advises state and local governments on recycling policy.

Schafer said legislative activity in 2008 and 2009 showed that the extended producer responsibility model has taken root. In 2010, he said, "I don't think you are going to see states come up with different solutions that run too far away from what other states had already done," he said. "We are starting to run out of states that are likely candidates to pass legislation, so that's probably one of the reasons we saw only two states pass legislation in 2009," said Jason Linnell, executive director of the National Center for Electronics Recycling. "I think we'll see a few more than that in 2010."

There are some states that have been looking at the e-waste issue for years but haven't passed a law yet, Linnell said. Such states will "feel the pressure from their neighboring states to do something," he said. Massachusetts

setts, New Hampshire and New York are likely to act in 2010, he said. In the longer term, there are still about five to 10 states that are "pretty likely candidates to pass something," he said.

Barbara Kyle of the Electronics TakeBack Coalition doesn't believe the e-waste issue has reached a saturation point in the states, although "it is certainly slowing down." Many of the states for whom e-waste was a "burning issue" have already enacted laws, she said. Also, e-waste bills don't usually pass the first year they're introduced, she said. "So the ones that are likely to pass [in 2010] are the ones that worked it this year or longer like New York or Vermont," she said. Others likely to act next year are Pennsylvania, Colorado and Idaho, she said.

States that were active on the e-waste issue in 2009 will continue to pursue legislation in 2010, said Parker Brugge, CEA vice president of environmental affairs. States like Colorado, Utah and Nevada had study bills this year, he said. "We think there is not nearly as much this year as has been in the past but we think there will be considerable activity in a handful of states in 2010." — *Dinesh Kumar*

Companies

Watteco, a maker of powerline communications modems for energy-efficient home control, said it received the French government's small and medium enterprise Digital Green Innovation Prize for the company's "achievements in eco-sustainable technologies that reduce carbon footprints and improve energy efficiency."

E-Waste

Electronic Recyclers International said copper smelter LS-Nikko invested an undisclosed amount in the company to mine e-waste for precious metals. ERI said it's guaranteed a home for the massive volume of commodities that come from its electronic waste recycling facilities in the U.S. LS-Nikko, of South Korea, gets a "minority investment position in ERI," the recycler said.

Federal Actions

Albemarle and Chemtura, U.S. producers of the flame retardant decaBDE, and ICL Industries Products, the largest importer of the chemical, have committed to phasing out decaBDE, the EPA said. DecaBDE is used as a flame retardant in plastic casings for TVs and other electronics and wire and cable insulation. "The companies have committed to end production, importation, and sales of decaBDE for most uses in the United States by December 31, 2012, and to end all uses by the end of 2013," the agency said. Steve Owens, the assistant administrator of the EPA's Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances, said: "Though decaBDE has been used as a flame retardant for years, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has long been concerned about its impact on human health and the environment. Studies have shown that DecaBDE persists in the environment, potentially causes cancer and may impact brain function." Maine and Washington imposed bans in 2007 on the use of poly-

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brominated diphenyl ethers such as decaBDE as flame retardants in casings for TVs and other electronic devices (GED March 6 p2). Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, New York and Vermont have bills to phase out or restrict the use of the chemical. The CEA has said none of the "brand name" TV and computer makers are now using decaBDE in their products (GED Feb 11 p1). "They have found substitutes and the substitutes have been working just as well," said Parker Brugge, the vice president of environmental affairs.

Green Notes

The smart grid is part of climate change solutions, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., told members of the Demand Response and Smart Grid coalition in Copenhagen on Friday. Pelosi is leading a congressional delegation to the U.N. climate talks. "We in the Congress believe that developing the smart grid is indeed an option that can provide multiple dividends to U.S. businesses and consumers," a coalition press release quoted Pelosi as saying. "It can lower costs, create jobs and make our nation more competitive in the international marketplace." The smart grid also is "important to climate change and we think it ought to be part of the climate change debate, both here in Copenhagen and back home," she said. The coalition gave the delegation an overview of the smart grid and demonstrated the working of some smart grid devices, it said. The coalition told the delegation that it's sponsoring Smart Green Grid Initiative, an initiative aimed at "educating the climate change community on smart grid and gaining its support for development of the smart grid," it said. Coalition members include GE, Google, IBM, Landis+Gyr, LG Electronics, Lockheed Martin, Oracle and Zigbee Alliance.

The Telecommunications Industry Association said its Smart Device Communications Engineering Committee started work toward promptly producing a ubiquitous protocol for communicating with smart devices for industries such as energy distribution, manufacturing, building and home automation and transportation. The committee kicked off its work at a meeting Thursday, and CEA, Alcatel-Lucent, Cisco, Ericsson, Intel, Microsoft, Motorola and others took part, it said.



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