



John Muir Chapter

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Support AB 278 / SB 107, Keeping Electronic Waste out of Landfills

Before the Assembly Natural Resources Committee 06/03/2009,

Jim Connors, Volunteer Lobbyist and Eric Uram Conservation Chair, Sierra Club- John Muir Chapter

Thank you for holding a public hearing on this important and precedent-setting initiative, and for accepting our statement on this key conservation issue. Sierra Club- John Muir Chapter's 15,000 members, as Wisconsin residents and taxpayers, through their local governments, spend millions of dollars annually to manage products banned from landfilling as well as those headed to be buried forever in landfills. We support AB 278 / SB 107 and the associated goals it will help achieve.

Waste generation over the years has grown with population and economic growth. While Wisconsin has made enormous advances in recycling, we throw away about the same amount of trash today as we did 20 years ago. Programs that address product recycling promote innovative product design and management. This will result in less waste generation and more easily recycled products that support a healthy environment, vibrant economy and reduce society's overall costs.

AB 278 / SB 107 will increase recycling – recycling a ton of so-called “waste” has twice the economic impact of burying it in the ground and prevents the environmental pollution and liability issues associated with their disposal. This, in turn, will reap environmental benefits – by diverting surplus electronic materials from landfills.

This will result in:

- Reduced toxic air and emissions water releases – using existing resources rather than virgin materials reduces the associated pollution created from mining, refining and transporting raw materials.
- Reduced toxic product components – increasing the responsibility of manufacturers to address the end-of-life of their products encourages more thoughtful design.
- Increased energy efficiency – recycling rather than disposal will result in significant energy savings.

AB 278 will also create a level playing field in Wisconsin – relieving residents and businesses of having to comply with a patchwork of local regulations and ordinances implemented in response to rising disposal costs and related liability issues.

AB 278 / SB 107 will help protect and conserve resources – by helping create markets for recycled materials. This bill can protect the sensitive regions where resource extraction conflicts with other environmental priorities including protecting existing air and water quality or high-value biologic or aesthetic aspects.

AB 278 / SB 107 will help protect the economy – by directly connecting manufacturers to the recycling markets. This bill will help stabilize prices for recycled materials and enhance their use in future design and production.

Thank you for considering this important legislation. We urge you to pass AB 278 / SB 107.