

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 109

(Delegates Morhaim and Bobo)

Environmental Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environment - Electronic Waste Collection Systems

This bill requires the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to study the establishment and implementation, by January 2006, of an electronic waste collection system in the State. MDE must report its recommendations for funding such a system to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2004. MDE must report its findings and recommendations for the establishment and implementation of a system by July 1, 2005.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2004 and terminates July 31, 2005.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill's changes could be handled with existing budgeted resources. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: The bill would not materially affect local operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Background: Since 2001 MDE has participated in a regional pilot project (called "e-Cycling") with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia. EPA and industry funding for this project has ended, however. The goal of the project was to develop information and data necessary to develop an infrastructure and a sustainable program for the proper management, recycling, and removal of cathode ray tubes and other electronic

components and their associated hazardous materials from the waste stream. Twenty counties in Maryland and Baltimore City co-sponsored and participated in e-Cycling events in conjunction with the pilot project. As of December 2003, estimated costs for e-Cycling activities totaled over \$600,000, not including personnel, advertising, or operating costs.

According to MDE, the National Electronics Product Stewardship Initiative, which includes electronics manufacturers, governments, and nongovernment officials, created a national dialogue to establish an electronics waste recycling program for businesses and consumers. In January 2004, EPA announced it would no longer fund the initiative because its focus has shifted to federal legislation addressing electronic waste. EPA has, however, indicated that it would continue to work with stakeholders to find solutions to the electronic waste issue. In addition, EPA has encouraged states to seek partnerships with business and industry. In February 2004, the Electronics Industries Alliance announced an agreement with state governments and environmental groups to draft legislation to create a nationwide electronics recycling program.

According to the Midshore Regional Recycling Program, some computer manufacturers are offering recycling services at a cost of about \$30 per computer. MDE estimates transportation and recycling costs to average approximately \$0.25 per pound of electronic waste.

MDE reports that several states including Massachusetts, California, Minnesota, Florida, and Arkansas have dedicated state resources to local governments and the private sector to develop an infrastructure for the collection of electronic waste.

According to MDE, in 1998, more than 20 million personal computers became obsolete nationally, while only 14% of those were reused or recycled. According to EPA, an estimated 2.26 million tons of consumer electronics were discarded nationally in 2001. Based on that estimate, MDE estimates that about 42,714 tons (85.43 million pounds) of electronics were discarded in Maryland in that year. From October 2001 through December 2003, MDE advises that about 1,550 tons (3.1 million pounds) of electronics were collected through various one-day recycling events and permanent collection facilities.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of the Environment, Midshore Regional Recycling Program, Office of the Attorney General (Consumer Protection Division), Department of Legislative Services

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