

DANA M. STEIN
Legislative District 11B
Baltimore County

SPEAKER PRO TEM

Environment and Transportation
Committee

Subcommittees

Chair, Environment

Natural Resources,
Agriculture and Open Space



The Maryland House of Delegates
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 301
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3527 · 301-858-3527
800-492-7122 Ext. 3527
Dana.Stein@house.state.md.us

Delegate Dana Stein Testimony in Support of

HB 931 – Environment-Covered Electronic Devices Recycling Program

We spend more than \$160 billion on consumer electronic products every year. These are great products, but their core materials must be managed safely. Some materials are toxic, most are reusable.

This bill deals with recycling of electronics. But it's also a critical health and safety bill, because fires can be caused by electronics with embedded batteries.

First, the recycling part. Too many electronic products end up in landfills or worse. In 2005, with legislation sponsored by Del. Morhaim, we set up a program that charged manufacturers fees that were to fund electronic recycling efforts in Maryland. But over time, these fees have proven to be inadequate. Only in four years was MDE able to provide grants of minimal amounts, \$15,000 in some cases, to localities to underwrite recycling of electronics.

As a result, most counties can't recycle all electronics, though some do with fees charged at public drop off or through local taxes. Tens of millions of pounds of electronics are being landfilled in the State every year, due to lack of funding.

This bill would change that. It would set up a program for the collection, recycling, refurbishment, and reuse of electronic devices. Fees on new electronics would be assessed at point of sale and would cover the cost of collecting and recycling TVs, laptops, monitors, phones, and other products. Consumers will not be charged the fee if purchasing a refurbished electronic device or one listed for resale.

MDE would administer the program or could delegate it to a third party through public procurement, including the option to use a national non-profit that already administers electronics recycling programs in states such as Oregon, Vermont, Illinois, and South Carolina. Retailers could keep 3% of the proceeds. The bill also would apply to online sales.

It would also establish a comprehensive statewide education program, by providing information on consumer receipts, directing the public on how they are able to recycle end of life devices at no cost.

The bill will fully fund local governments and other collectors to hire small businesses, nonprofits, recyclers and service-based organizations to collect and beneficially use end-of-life electronics, creating green-collar jobs, giving our state the opportunity to divert even more from our waste stream.

Commented [KM1]: This is per the excel sheet I sent you. It has data to back up this statement.

Manufacturers would pay \$5,000 per year for mid-size producers and \$10,000 per year for large producers to support MDE's administrative costs.

Most importantly, this bill is more than just a recycling bill. It is a critical health and safety bill. Fires caused by batteries embedded in electronics are rapidly increasing in Maryland. These incidents put landfill, recycling and waste collection workers at risk along with capital infrastructure like MRFs, transfer stations, collection sites, trucks and other processing equipment. Securing insurance for recycling and solid waste infrastructure is becoming more expensive and harder to do. Our first responders are receiving increased call-outs due to battery fires.

This bill will fund equipment and technology to properly prevent and address fire incidents at electronics collection sites. It will improve workplace safety by funding dedicated staff to monitor, sort, and load all electronic types, ranging from large, heavy TVs to Damaged, Defective, or Recalled (DDR) battery-embedded products requiring special handling.

Finally, the bill sets up an advisory council to make recommendations on all aspects of the program.

All in all, this bill is a win for human health, the economy, and the environment.