

This international treaty, signed by all developed nations except the U.S., requires all countries to become self-sufficient in hazardous waste management, and the parties to this treaty have passed a decision to amend the Basel Convention to ban all exports of hazardous waste from wealthy industrialized countries to developing countries.

We Pledge to....

In signing the Electronic Recycler's Pledge of True Stewardship, the recyclers agree to:

- Conduct business with a comprehensive environmental management system and to meet best practices;
- Seek out business partners and vendors that meet all applicable environmental and health regulations;
- Seek to utilize recycling and smelting operations downstream that provide the best environmental protections worldwide;
- Provide the highest standards for efficiency, cleanliness, health, and safety;
- Help track the flow of e-waste;
- Cover costs, including environmental ones, of closing their facilities and maintain adequate liability insurance for accidents; and
- Support legislation favoring Extended Producer Responsibility programs, viable end-of-life financing mechanisms, and the reduction of toxic substances in electronics manufacturing;

They also promised, either directly or through intermediaries, NOT to:

- **allow hazardous e-waste to be exported to developing countries;**
- **allow hazardous e-waste to be sent to landfills or incinerators; or**
- **use prison labor in any aspect of their operations.**

The complete Pledge can be found at the following websites: www.ban.org, www.svtc.org, www.computertakeback.com.

The Beginning of a Sustainable E-waste Market

By virtue of the pledge, at last we have identified sustainable and ethical destinations for our e-waste. The Basel Action Network, Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition and the Computer TakeBack Campaign salute these recyclers who stand at the cutting edge of market solutions to the e-waste crisis. We urge local governments, businesses, and consumers to discover and make use of these trailblazing recyclers that have taken the tough decision to do the *right* thing rather than the *cheapest* thing.

The founding companies upholding the pledge (as of February 25, 2003) are:

- **Asset Recovery Corp.**, St. Paul, MN - www.assetrecoverycorp.com
- **Cascade Asset Management**, Madison, WI -- www.cascade-assets.com
- **Hackett Electronics**, San Jose, CA -- www.hackettelec.com
- **Maxim Industries**, Ft. Lauderdale, FL -- www.4scrap.com
- **Maxus Technology Inc.**, Calgary, Alberta -- www.maxustech.com
- **PC Salvage LLC.**, Lakewood, WA -- www.allaboutpcsalvage.com
- **ReCellular Inc.**, Ann Arbor, MI; Miami, FL; Dexter, MI -- www.recellular.com, www.wirelessrecycling.com
- **RE-PC**, Seattle, WA. -- www.repc.com
- **Resource Concepts**, Carrollton, TX -- www.resourcecon.com
- **RetroSystems**, Calgary/Edmonton, Alberta -- www.retrosystems.com
- **Scientific Recycling, Inc.**, Holmen, WI -- www.scientificrecycling.com
- **Total Reclaim**, Seattle, WA -- www.totalreclaim.com
- **trueCycle**, Pasadena, CA -- www.truecycle.com
- **United DataTech**, Santa Clara, CA, -- www.uniteddatatech.com
- **Zak Enterprises**, Santa Clara, CA -- www.zakenterprises.com

We hope the list of leaders in the electronic recycling field will grow in the coming months and years. Please check the up-to-date listing of Pledge Signatories regularly at: www.ban.org, www.svtc.org, www.computertakeback.com

Finally!

A Place We Can Take Our Electronic Waste and Feel Good About It!

The Electronic Recycler's Pledge of True Stewardship



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E-Waste -- The World's Fastest Growing Waste Problem

Electronic waste or e-waste, is the fastest growing waste problem in the world. It is a crisis not only of quantity but also a crisis born from toxic ingredients – such as lead, and mercury, that pose both an occupational and environmental health threat. To date, industry and government have taken only small steps to deal with this looming problem.

As a result, conscientious consumers have faced a real dilemma about what to do with obsolete or broken computers and other electronic devices. Since more consumers now realize that throwing toxic techno-trash into household garbage is a bad idea (because it will contaminate the local landfill, leading to groundwater contamination) many people are now looking for effective recycling options.

The Dirty Little Secret of Electronics Recycling

"We did not care much when outsiders talked about the environmental pollution here. We did not see any harm, but now our kids are getting sick."

– Mr. Chen of Guiyu, China, Associated Press
02/28/2002

At the close of 2001, the Basel Action Network and the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition investigated reports that computers collected for recycling in the United States and Canada were actually being exported en masse to Asia where they were causing great environmental damage. This practice was widely acknowledged in the industry and yet nobody had ever gone to observe this Asian “electronics recycling.”

The result of the investigation was the publication and subsequent video entitled, “**Exporting Harm: The High-Tech Trashing of Asia.**” Released in February 2002, this report for the first time revealed how the world’s richest nations fail to take responsibility for their own wastes by exporting an estimated 80% of obsolete electronics collected for recycling to Asia. It also documented how such export and processing in Asia is creating an environmental crisis in the poorest countries that are least able to protect the environmental health of their citizens.

The inquiry led us to shantytowns and farming villages in China, India, and Pakistan. People across the world shuddered at images in “Exporting Harm” showing workers -- including children -- smashing lead-filled monitors with hammers and melting circuit boards over open flames in the streets. Under clouds of highly toxic smoke from burning wires and plastics, people went about their daily business, often drawing water for cooking and drinking from sources contaminated by recycling activities. At one site, in Guiyu, China, the local water supply had, since the onset of the electronics recycling, become undrinkable. Soil and water samples taken there contained lead concentrations 190 times higher than the World Health Organization’s threshold for

drinking water. The massive export of e-waste for so-called recycling that continues to this day is the “dirty little secret” of the high-tech revolution.



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The “Cheap and Dirty” Way Out

Interviews with recycling firms quickly uncovered two forces driving the export of e-waste. One is a lack of environmental and occupational health controls, laws and infrastructure to enforce such laws; the other is the cheap cost of labor, which in China sometimes amounts to as little as \$1.50 for a day’s work spent dismantling electronics.

Unable to compete on these terms, recyclers in the U.S. also face unfair competition at home from prison labor e-scrap programs that are growing at an alarming rate. Furthermore, it is known that much e-waste, despite its known hazardous constituents such as lead, simply winds up dumped in local landfills, or incinerated in local government solid waste disposal systems and sites.

All of these disposal methods constitute disposal options that unfairly and unsustainably externalize the true end-of-life impacts and costs of managing electronic waste. As such, they provide a form of perverse subsidy to the electronics

industry – a kind of reward for continuing to create and then push pollution problems off onto others, rather than take responsibility for them at the source. These “cheap and dirty” outlets for electronic waste victimize workers and local environments around the world. At the same time, they all serve to prevent needed incentives to work on real solutions of designing products for efficient recycling, minimization of toxic inputs and finally, the realization of an effective, private sector, market-based recycling infrastructure.

Hope on the Horizon -- A Pledge is Born

In the year since “Exporting Harm” appeared, public scrutiny of e-waste disposal practices has sparked a search for eco-friendly, socially just solutions that will serve to prevent downstream pollution and damage to human health. We need to provide incentives for “greener and cleaner” electronics designs and to build up a viable, sustainable infrastructure for recycling here at home.

While the U.S. government as well as major electronics manufacturers have failed to respond to the crisis, hope is on the horizon. A corps of concerned, private sector electronics recyclers has responded to the challenge of dealing with the largest growing toxic waste crisis.

These companies, working together with the Basel Action Network (BAN), the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition (SVTC) and the Computer TakeBack Campaign (CTBC), have all announced that they will pledge to meet the world’s strictest standards for handling e-waste. The landmark Electronic Recycler’s Pledge of True Stewardship was launched on February 25th, 2003.

The companies signing the pledge, like their counterparts in Europe, are North American recyclers that have voluntarily agreed to uphold the decisions of the Basel Convention.