



Memorandum

MONTEREY REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Reviewed by WMM Date 1/8/08
General Manager

DATE: January 8, 2008
TO: General Manager
FROM: Public Education and Recycling Manager
SUBJECT: Report on Public Education, Recycling and Litter Abatement Activities

Litter Report

The District is offering a new internship opportunity through the Monterey Institute of International Studies for further research and development of the www.KeepMontereyCountyClean.org web site. The objective of this project is to update the site to expand content to include:

- Comprehensive information on pollution in the marine environment, especially with regard to plastic debris.
- Information on how to help: local volunteer opportunities, beach clean-ups, community clean-ups, etc.
- Action cities are taking to reduce litter such as cigarette bans, polystyrene fast food packaging bans, etc.
- Highlight the positive impact local business sponsors make through the CalTrans Adopt-A-Highway program.

For information on the Polystyrene fast food packaging ban discussed at the last Litter Abatement Task Force meeting, please refer to the January 7, 2008 polystyrene update (Agenda Item 8).

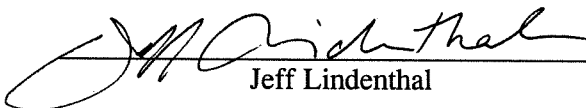
Recycling Report

The General Manager's commentary on electronic waste appeared in the Monterey County Herald on January 2nd. A copy of the column is attached. Following several news reports concerning e-waste that is processed offshore and endangering people and the environment, this article accurately portrays how e-waste collected at the District is properly dismantled and recycled at up to a 98% recovery rate.

We received a note of appreciation recently from staff at California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB). Students there had entered a film contest called the 24 Hours of Insomnia (because students have 24 hours to write, film, edit, score and upload a 3-minute film). The Last Chance Mercantile figured into their project because the students were able to find their costumes (several clown suits and medical scrubs) for just a few dollars which was all their budget allowed. According to a CSUMB official, "without the costumes they found, the film wouldn't have been as successful". Over 3,000 entries were submitted and the CSUMB students did well to finish in the top 25. To learn more about this student film project visit: <http://csumb.edu/site/x21073.xml>

STRATEGIC PLANNING IMPACT

A6a: Program focus on public awareness, increased diversion of organics and commercial wastes, proper management of hazardous and prohibited materials, litter abatement, and sustainability.


Jeff Lindenthal

Attachment

O:\j\Jeff's MRWMD Files\Board Memos\Board Memos 2008\January 08\Recycling & Litter 1.18 board memo.doc

Make it easier to recycle e-waste

By WILLIAM MERRY

Guest commentary, Monterey County Herald, 01/02/2008

With the holiday season comes a huge wave of old electronic items such as televisions and computers replaced with the latest technology. The volume of this "e-waste" is staggering. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 30 million to 40 million computers and 25 million televisions will be replaced in each of the next few years.

Where does all this material go? First, it's important to understand where it can't go. Locally, that is the Peninsula landfill and the landfills operated by the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority. California is one of 10 states that have banned, or will ban in the coming years, electronic waste from landfill disposal. The California law also extends to household batteries and fluorescent light bulbs.

Your television and computer are likely the appliances with the most toxic ingredients in your entire home. A typical cathode ray tube (CRT) monitor contains between 4 and 8 pounds of lead. Newer flat-panel screens contain less lead, but use more mercury. E-waste also may contain barium, beryllium, cadmium, chromium, brominated flame retardants and PVC. If buried in landfills, illegally dumped or improperly recycled, these toxic ingredients can leach into soil, pollute our waterways, or become airborne. Proper end-of-life management for the rising tide of e-waste is essential to the health of our communities.

The EPA estimates that millions of tons of e-waste are still being buried in landfills. A recent Associated Press article in The Herald stated that as much as half the electronics collected in U.S. recycling programs is shipped overseas, with the potential to endanger workers and pollute other countries. Instances where exported e-waste is causing nightmarish pollution offshore are now well documented.

With this comes new reports that the lead solders from exported e-waste are the likely source of the lead contamination in children's toys that has been in the news over the last year. The toxic peril of e-waste has come full circle.

Here at the Monterey Regional Waste Management District, just north of Marina, the amount of electronic waste accepted free of charge at our Last Chance Mercantile program has jumped dramatically — from 233,280 pounds in 2006 to 484,855 pounds in 2007. January and February are our busiest months for e-waste drop-offs.

What happens to all this material collected? Does it become part of the flood of e-waste leaving the country to become someone else's problem? The short answer is no.

The district contracts with a San Francisco Bay Area recycler that dismantles electronic waste. Monitors and TVs, for example, are de-manufactured into recyclable components, including CRT glass, plastics, metals, copper yokes, miscellaneous copper-bearing material and circuit boards. The CRT glass is then shipped to secondary processors for "glass to lead" or "glass to glass" recycling.

The components of computers, hard drives, laptop computers and circuit boards are separated into specific commodity types. The scrap metal is sold to a regional metal scrap market. Plastics are baled and then sold to domestic and foreign plastic recycling companies. Circuit boards are marketed directly to metal refiners. Overall, the recycler strives to achieve a 98 percent recycling rate for e-waste collected here.

The e-waste and household hazardous waste program run by the district, open six days a week to residents of its service area, costs more than \$500,000 per year and is funded through landfill disposal fees. The cost to site and operate a program like ours is prohibitive for individual cities. Because of this, for the last 20 years the district has taken on the responsibility to ensure that household hazardous waste materials are properly collected and managed.

To be successful, recycling programs need to be convenient. The district is working to help provide a local solution. What is still needed is the commitment and support of electronics manufacturers to make it easy for consumers to take back their products. In the industry, we refer to this as "extended producer responsibility." Sony has recently pledged to take back Sony-brand electronics at a network of nationwide collection points, but there are no locations on the Central Coast.

We urge other manufacturers to follow suit so recycling an old television or computer can be as easy as purchasing a new one. To learn more about which companies offer programs to recycle your old electronics when you buy a new item, visit www.computertakeback.com or the district's Web site at www.mrwmd.org.

William Merry is general manager of the Monterey Regional Waste Management District.