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March 13, 2015

The Honorable Representative Carol Ammons
407 E. University Ave., Suite A
Champaign, IL 61820

Dear Representative Ammons:

I am writing to urge you to support legislation for HB 1455. As a supporter of electronics recycling initiatives, the City of Urbana supports HB 1455 and asks you to consider supporting or co-sponsoring this amended electronics legislation. HB 1455 is intended as a short-term 'fix' to ensure adequate funding for electronic recycling programs throughout Illinois. The City of Urbana supports the short-term fix that is being considered this session. We support raising the manufacturers' electronics recycling goal to 80% of the total pounds of electronics sold instead of the 50% that is currently in the law. This goal is too low to adequately support the electronics recycling efforts of millions of Illinois citizens, let alone Urbana citizens.

For more background, the Electronics Products Recycling and Reuse Act, as currently written in Illinois State law, is a manufacturers' take-back program that is currently underfunded. At the root of the problem is the complex formula used to determine how much manufacturers pay into the program. Manufacturers must pay electronics recyclers a negotiated amount based on a percentage of the sales or weight sold by them in Illinois two years prior. The percentage goals required by law (currently 50 percent by weight) have been too low, which recently has been further aggravated by a large influx of CRT/TV leaded glass, which is heavy and costly to recycle due to limited options. With lighter electronics being sold, Illinois' annual weight goals have decreased from 51.6 million pounds in 2013 to 42.2 million in 2014 and decreased even further to 36.8 million in 2015, according to the Illinois EPA. As the state recycling goal decreases so does the level of funding by manufacturers, further restricting the program.

Once manufacturers' goals were met in 2014 statewide communities, including Urbana, were faced with an unfunded mandate to continue electronics collections. This has had a significant impact on our citizens trying to properly recycle electronics, and impacts budgets on local, county and state governments that are forced to fund electronics collection events.

House Bill 1455 adjusts the funding formula for the in-demand electronics recycling programs by raising the manufacturers' annual goal from 50% by weight to 80% by weight. If nothing is done, the steep cost of recycling could shift to consumers or to local governments that hold collection events. In Champaign County, Urbana partners with the County, City of Champaign and Village of Savoy to conduct semi-annual countywide residential electronics recycling events. One event was canceled in 2014 because our contracted electronics recycler had no remaining manufacturer funds available to conduct the event. This year, Urbana and local governments agreed to pay a fee to contract with an electronics recycler in order to conduct the semi-annual countywide residential electronics collections.



Representative Ammons, your support of HB 1455 is greatly appreciated in allowing Illinois citizens to properly recycle electronics that are banned from Illinois landfills. The future of electronics recycling is in jeopardy unless amended legislation is enacted, and long-term solutions are identified. Thank you for your time and consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

William R. Gray
Public Works Director, City of Urbana

Courtney Kwong
Recycling Coordinator, City of Urbana