

# Capital Area Resource Recovery Roundtable:

## Computer and Electronics Recycling

August 21, 2008

### Summary of Discussion Points and Comments by Roundtable Participants

*(Please note, these items are not edited by CAPCOG for accuracy, and are meant to serve only as a means to capture the discussion and comments of roundtable participants. Items are listed in no particular order.)*

The new Texas Computer Recycling Program beginning September 1, 2008 requires computer equipment manufacturers to provide consumers with a free and convenient option for consumers to recycle computer equipment. In this case “free” means free at the time of recycling; manufacturers may charge an advance recycling fee or otherwise include the cost of recycling in the sale price of computer equipment.

Manufacturer plans for computer equipment recycling are posted at [www.TexasRecyclesComputers.org](http://www.TexasRecyclesComputers.org).

Manufacturers are required only to take back computer equipment directly from consumers. If a local government program collects computers from citizens, the manufacturers are no longer required to take them back for free.

The new Texas computer take-back law is an example of a different view of waste management which shifts responsibility and financial burden for end-of-life management of manufactured products away from local governments.

It is essential that consumers, local governments and manufacturers are aware of the downstream outlets for computer equipment sent for recycling, and the environmental and safety standards employed by those downstream outlets. The State program establishes minimum standards for computer equipment recyclers, but local governments and manufacturers may require their recycling partners to meet standards above and beyond those set by the State.

Goodwill Industries of Central Texas will take any computer equipment for recycling regardless of manufacturer. Goodwill computer equipment recycling services are usually free for consumers or local governments (for large amounts from local governments fees may apply). Goodwill will also take working televisions for free, and non-working televisions for a small fee.

It is important to educate consumers that they should not “dump through donation” by donating obsolete, non-functional computer equipment to organizations who do not have the resources to appropriately manage non-usable equipment. For example, local schools may appreciate donation of new or well-functioning computers, but those that receive donations of unusable computers may face disposal or recycling costs for the equipment.

Local governments may continue to collect computer equipment if they wish to do so, either independently or through partnerships with manufacturers, Goodwill, or others. If they collect equipment independently, local governments may charge a fee to cover the costs of recycling. If local governments collect equipment through an agreement with a manufacturer, they may NOT charge a fee for equipment from that manufacturer.

Local governments and Council of Government organizations have an opportunity to work together to conduct regional education campaigns to inform consumers of the new Texas Computer Recycling Program.

In the future, other products may be managed using a similar producer take-back framework, such as televisions, compact fluorescent bulbs, and other hazardous manufactured consumer products.