



The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Clark B. Freise, Assistant Commissioner

January 24, 2017

The Honorable Richard Barry, Chair
Science, Technology and Energy Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 304
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

RE: HB 547, An Act relative to recycling and disposal of electronic waste

Dear Chair Barry and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 547. This bill establishes a statewide program, to be administered by the Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), to recycle and dispose of electronic waste. The bill establishes the Electronic Collection and Recycling Fund to cover the cost of program implementation and administration. Revenues to fund the program will be provided by fees assessed on electronics manufacturers. NHDES supports efforts to improve electronic waste recycling opportunities, but has concerns about the bill as written.

Electronic devices contain toxic materials (including lead, mercury, and chromium) that should be managed responsibly, as well as precious metals (such as gold) that should be recovered and recycled. As a result, many types of electronic waste are banned from disposal in landfills and incinerators in New Hampshire. In response to these bans, municipal solid waste transfer stations and other solid waste facilities have developed alternative options for disposal of electronic waste, which usually require the user to pay a fee for disposal. The availability, cost, and management options for disposal of electronic waste vary widely across the state. This bill would require NHDES to evaluate existing electronic waste collection options and services, and to adopt a plan for collection and recycling of electronic waste by January 1, 2019. The bill sets minimum requirements for the regional siting of permanent recycling facilities. The bill establishes a nonlapsing Electronic Waste Collection and Recycling Fund, which is continually appropriated to NHDES to cover program implementation costs. Funding comes from fees to be collected by NHDES from manufacturers that sell electronic devices in the state.

The program appears to mirror an electronic waste recycling program currently being operated in the state of Vermont, which is reportedly very successful. NHDES supports efforts to improve electronic waste recycling opportunities in our state. However, under the bill, the start up costs and personnel time that would be required before any revenues from manufacturers would be received are substantial. At present, NHDES has no source of funding or available personnel to perform this work. Our preliminary review of Vermont's program suggests that at least three Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation employees are involved with that state's program, at a level of effort exceeding one full time employee. NHDES is concerned that it would be unable to fulfill the requirements of the bill if passed as written.

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In summary, NHDES supports the intent of this legislation, but has concerns regarding the resources needed for implementation. We would be happy to work with the bill sponsor to address these concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 547. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Pamela Hoyt-Denison, Administrator of Waste Programs (Pamela.Hoyt-Denison@des.nh.gov, 271-2945.) or Michael J. Wimsatt, Director, Waste Management Division (Michael.Wimsatt@des.nh.gov, 271-1997)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Freise', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Clark B. Freise
Assistant Commissioner

cc: Sponsors of HB 547: Rep. Bixby