

Lakes Region Planning Commission

E-Waste Round Table Discussion

4/27/2017

- The low commodity value of e-waste products in recent years is causing vendors and transfer stations to cheat to save money.
  - With commodity values so low the cost of labor to sort, dismantle and truck e-waste is drastically cutting into e-waste handlers profit margins.
  - Both transfer stations and vendors have been found either stockpiling or dumping their e-waste trying to wait until prices rise once again.
    - Ex. Jaffrey
- Takeback programs should be developed state-wide for e-waste so that people can responsibly dispose of their electronics without having to pay the sometimes high fees of transfer stations.
  - Ways of opening up to the public could be:
    - E-Waste Days a few times a year similar to Household Hazardous Waste Days where people can come and drop off their e-waste at little or no cost to them.
    - Requiring retailers who sell computers and TV's to register with the EPA and accept computers and TV's to be dropped off at their locations by consumers and small businesses.
      - Ex. Staples & Best Buy currently provide this service to some extent.
- Better separation at the transfer station correlates to a lower cost for the town.
  - A town who separates their e-waste into multiple bins (TV's, monitors, CPU's, cellphones, etc.) is going to pay less towards their vendor than a transfer station who simply throws it all into one container and ships it out.
    - Better separation at the transfer station = less separation that the vendor then has to do, lowering their amount of labor, which in turn lowers the towns costs.
- Where is the fine line in charging for e-waste?
  - Towns have found that if they charge what is thought by residents to be too much they in turn find TV's and computers dumped along-side their roads.
    - This could possibly be helped by educating the towns people on why it costs what it does to dispose of their electronics and what they can do to save money in the future.
      - Ex. Utilizing takeback opportunities.
  - However, if they charge too little obviously they cut down on or eliminate their profit margin.
- The need for clear rules or guidelines on e-waste disposal.
  - Each town currently has control over their e-waste practices.
    - What they charge.
    - What they accept.
    - To what extent they sort it.
    - Who they send it to.

- The state should work with the town officials to create a set standard of prices as well as a set list of items that they will accept as well as how they sort it.
    - Creating a standard for all towns to follow will eliminate confusion and could help steer people towards recycling e-waste rather than dumping if they see all towns within their state following the same rules rather than just being unhappy with the way their particular town handles it.
- Towns and vendors should work together to better regulate e-waste and develop greater efficiency.
  - Providing tours of their facilities, conducting workshops, or meetings.
    - Building a relationship to work together could increase both efficiency and the profit margin for both the transfer station (and town) and the vendors.
- Information about security of how hard drives are handled.
  - Some clients throwing away hard drives could care less what happens to them while other want serial number or video proof of them being destroyed.
- Collect vendor cost information from towns.
- Research conducting competitive regional RFP for collection.
- Loon Society data on e-waste affecting Squam Lake (other data affecting human health)
- Data on illegal e-waste disposal in Lakes Region.
- Outreach to towns w/ low e-collection rates.
  - Why are their numbers low?
  - What can be done to increase the amount of e-waste recycled.
- North Coast Recycling does not require contracts.
- Anything with a cord is e-waste.
- Security concerns with the use of third parties -> URT direct
  - Same with environmental impact.
- Concerns (ex. Illegal dumping/China)
  - Chain of custody concerns
- State of NH Hazardous Waste manifests requirements are not consistent
  - Legislative reform
- Site in Jaffrey mismanaged – case study
  - Stockpiling e-waste
- Composting rules/regulations
  - Maine regulations better
  - Pending NH legislation disallowing food waste in landfills
- Legislative reform
  - Maine stricter on e-waste but less strict on compost.
- What is the rationale behind e-waste price structures?
  - As mentioned above, why is every towns price list for e-waste so different?
    - Creating one set list for all towns to follow will simplify the process and increase profit.