



Hundredth Legislature - Second Session - 2008
Introducer's Statement of Intent
LB 986

Chairperson: LeRoy Louden
Committee: Natural Resources
Date of Hearing: January 31, 2008

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

The purpose of LB 986 is to establish an electronic waste (e-waste) recycling program in Nebraska. E-waste is the fastest growing municipal waste stream in the country. In 1999 the National Safety Council estimated there would be between 300 and 500 obsolete computers in the U.S. by 2005. The EPA estimates that approximately 57 million televisions and computers are sold each year in the United States and currently 20 to 24 million computers and televisions are added to storage each year.

In 2005 Congress mandated that broadcasters terminate analog television broadcast transmissions and switch to digital broadcasts by February 17, 2009 to ensure that state and local emergency responders have adequate spectrum to communicate and respond to natural disasters and terrorist attacks. According to the National Association of Broadcasters 70 million television sets still rely on an analog signal for television service. The digital conversion requirement will affect the volume of televisions that need to be recycled.

Though several bills have been introduced at the federal level, Congress has not yet enacted e-waste legislation. Ten states have passed legislation since 2001. California was the first state to pass an e-waste bill and is the only state to adopt the advanced recycling fee (ARF) model which imposes a consumer tax at the time of sale on each covered electronic device. Since then nine states have passed Producer Responsibility e-waste legislation including 5 states in 2007. The Council of State Governments has expressed opposition to the ARF model and supported the Producer Responsibility models such as the program proposed in LB 986. Manufacturers throughout the country also support Producer Responsibility legislation in order to establish a uniform system of e-waste legislation among the states.

LB 986 establishes a tiered fee structure for manufacturers based on the quantity of televisions, computers and computer monitors sold in Nebraska by the manufacturer. Fifty percent of the fee may be waived if the manufacturer has a plan to recycle the waste. The fee structure is tiered to exempt small Nebraska businesses from paying the fee. All the money is deposited in the Waste Reduction and Recycling Fund and earmarked for grants for infrastructure development, collection, transportation and recycling of e-waste.

Principal Introducer:

Senator Don Preister