



# **The City of New York Department of Sanitation**

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**Kathryn Garcia, Commissioner**

## **Oversight Hearing on New York City's E-Waste Policy: "How The City is Ramping Up Its Efforts in Light of the 2015 Disposal Ban" New York City Council Committee on Sanitation**

**Tuesday, December 9, 2014**

**1:00 P.M.**

**City Hall – Committee Room**

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Good afternoon Chair Reynoso and members of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. I am Kathryn Garcia, Commissioner for the New York Department of Sanitation. I am also joined by Bridget Anderson, Deputy Commissioner for the Department's Bureau of Recycling and Sustainability. Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the Department's outreach efforts to educate the public on the various ways they can recycle or properly dispose of their unwanted electronic equipment, commonly referred to as "e-waste", as the statewide disposal ban commences January 1, 2015 in accordance with the New York State Electronic Equipment Recycling and Reuse Act. I would like to provide some opening remarks, after which I will be happy to answer all of your questions.

Electronic equipment, which often contains lead, mercury and cadmium, now makes up the largest and fastest growing component of the hazardous materials entering the waste stream, and comprises 1% of the Department-managed waste stream based on our most recent Waste Characterization Study data. Encouraging the recycling of electronic equipment keeps both harmful components, and valuable recyclable materials, out of the waste stream and the environment. Many states already ban the disposal of electronic equipment as ordinary solid waste.

In keeping with this growing trend, in 2010, New York State enacted the “New York State Electronic Equipment Recycling and Reuse Act” which prohibits residents from disposing of electronic waste as solid waste beginning January 1, 2015. The law requires manufacturers to provide free and reasonably convenient recycling of electronic waste to most consumers in the state. Under the state law, electronic waste covers items almost all of us have and use each day in our apartments and homes, including computers, computer peripherals such as keyboards and computer mice, televisions, and small electronic equipment such as tablets.

Over the past decade, the management of electronic waste has become an increasingly important issue for all cities. However, given the unique challenges associated with our City -- where a majority of residents live in multi-residential apartment buildings and primarily rely on public transportation as their means of getting around -- managing the estimated 27,500 tons of electronic waste disposed of each year at the curb by residents in the City is no easy task. To make the recycling of e- waste more convenient for New York City residents, the Department launched a new and cost-free program called e-cycleNYC in November 2013 to facilitate the collection and recycling of electronics from apartment buildings. The e-cycleNYC service is available to apartment buildings having ten (10) or more dwelling units.

Depending on the size and type of building, apartment buildings may be eligible for a variety of on-site service options to conveniently and safely recycle unwanted electronics. There are three different e-cycleNYC service options, and Department staff will work closely with any building that expresses an interest in participating in the e-cycle program to determine which of these options will be the best fit for the interested building. The e-cycleNYC program options include:

- Room cleanouts for buildings with 10 or more units. With this option, participating buildings collect unwanted electronics in a designated location, until 20 items are ready for pickup;
- Storage bins for buildings with 50 or more dwelling units. Under this option, the building is provided with a locking bin to store electronics. There are two bin sizes available, a small bin (2 ft deep x 4 ft wide x 5 ft high) and a large bin (2 ft deep x 5 ft wide x 6 ft high). When the bin is full, it will be switched out with a new, empty bin; or
- Special Events for buildings with 250 or more dwelling units. Under this option, unwanted electronics are collected during pre-scheduled, outdoor events that buildings organize for their residents.

E-cycleNYC ensures that all materials collected through the program are handled in an environmentally responsible manner. None of the electronics accepted are landfilled or exported illegally. Electronics Recyclers International, the City's e-cycleNYC partner, is both e-stewards and R2/RIOS certified, which means that the City's program meets the two leading standards for responsible electronics recycling. In addition, while residents should remove data prior to discarding electronics, ERI will fully erase data as part of the recycling process. Moreover, this free program is funded through electronics manufacturers. No taxpayer money has been used to establish or undertake this program.

Since its inception in November 2013, e-cycleNYC has grown to be in all five boroughs. Currently, 450 buildings are enrolled in the program, servicing 72,600 households across the City. In just the first year of the program, e-cycleNYC collected over 255,000 pounds of electronic waste.

The goal of the e-cycleNYC program is to make electronics recycling as easy as possible for City residents, many of whom cannot readily transport TVs and other large electronics to drop-off events or retail take-back programs. New York's e-cycleNYC is one of a suite of programs that the Department has designed specifically for apartment buildings, similar to our successful textile recycling building program. It is the most expansive e-waste collection service offered by any municipality in the country that is being furnished at no cost to tax payers. We encourage building owners, management companies, and residents that wish to participate in e-cycleNYC to visit our website to complete an online inquiry form. Staff from the Bureau of Recycling and Sustainability will work closely with any building, management company, or group of residents that expresses an interest in participating in the e-cycleNYC program to determine which of these three options will work best for the interested participants and their building.

In addition to the e-cycleNYC program, all New York City residents are encouraged to attend the Department's SAFE Disposal Events where they may bring their unwanted e-waste free of charge. We have held SAFE Disposal Events every Spring in all five boroughs, but starting in 2015, the Department will expand the SAFE Disposal Events to occur twice a year in every borough for a total of 10 events per year. In 2014, these events were responsible for collecting 329,833 pounds of e-waste. New York City residents may also rely on existing take-back options for electronics, including over 90 free drop-off locations at charitable organizations such as Goodwill and Salvation Army and retailers such as Best Buy and Staples. In addition, the Lower East Side Ecology Center holds over 50 neighborhood e-waste recycling events throughout the year and maintains a permanent drop-off location in Brooklyn, the Gowanus E-Waste Warehouse. Information on these drop-off options and sites is available on DSNY's website at [nyc.gov/electronics](http://nyc.gov/electronics).

As the State law's imminent disposal ban approaches, the Department has ramped up its public education efforts by undertaking several approaches to increase e-waste recycling awareness and education among residents. For over a year, all of our apartment building super and manager recycling trainings highlight e-cycleNYC and mention the upcoming ban. We've also been working with the building superintendent and managers union, 32BJ, to notify their members on these programs.

The Department has been using its social media presence and NYCRecycles newsletter to inform City residents of the impending disposal ban. We've also arranged for an informative e-waste video to begin playing in standard rotation in city taxicabs on the NYCMedia channel starting this week throughout the month of December. We're also enhancing our existing web-based resources for City residents and building managers, as well as furnishing informational assistance to the City's landlords, tenants, building supers and managers, and co-op and condo board associations on request. As you know, last week the Department sent a notification of the impending disposal ban to all elected officials and community boards, and this week we are sending a mailer – like the enlarged version on the poster boards displayed here, to all City residents that notifies them of the disposal ban and advises what options are available for recycling e-waste after January 1, 2015.

Lastly, to combat the potential for the illegal disposal of electronic waste curbside, the Department has proposed a rule that would institute a violation for anyone who illegally places electronic waste out for Department collection or for disposal in a solid waste facility. The rule was published in the City Record on Friday, December 5, 2014. We will hold a public hearing on the rule on January 13, 2015 at 9:30 am at 125 Worth Street, in Room 330. More information on this proposed rule is available on our website or on the nycrules.gov website. Prior to implementing the proposed rule, we plan to run a public education period, beginning January 1, 2015, where any e-waste placed out for Department collection will be tagged with a sticker indicating that it is unlawful to place e-waste out for Department collection and advising the resident to visit the Department's website or call 311 to learn about the proper ways to discard e-waste.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on this important topic today. I'll be glad to answer any of your questions now.



NYC Department of Sanitation  
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## OFFICIAL NOTICE

Starting January 2015,  
 you can't discard  
 electronics in the trash.  
 Look inside for recycling options.

EDRM: ELECTRONIC DISPOSAL BAN MAILER 11.14



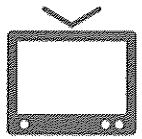
**NYC**  
 Recycles

call 311  
[nyc.gov/recycle](http://nyc.gov/recycle)  
   NYC Recycles

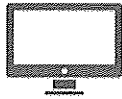
# Starting January 2015, it's illegal to discard electronics in the trash.



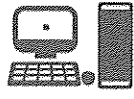
As of January 2015,  
these electronics can't be  
discarded in the trash.



TVs



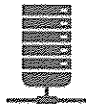
monitors



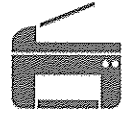
computers



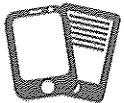
laptops



small servers



printers/  
scanners



tablets/  
e-readers



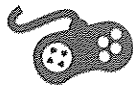
MP3  
players



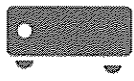
VCRs/DVRs/  
DVD players



fax machines



video game  
consoles



cable/  
satellite boxes



mice



keyboards

## Recycling Options for working & non-working electronics\*

- 1 DSNY's e-cycleNYC program.**  
Apartment buildings with more than 10 units can enroll for this free and convenient pickup service ([nyc.gov/ecycle](http://nyc.gov/ecycle)).
- 2 Retail drop-off programs.**  
For example, drop off electronics (no purchase required) at any Goodwill, Salvation Army, Best Buy, Staples (no TVs), or the Gowanus E-Waste Warehouse. See [nyc.gov/electronics](http://nyc.gov/electronics) for more info.
- 3 Free mail-back programs.**  
Check your brand's website for details.
- 4 Electronics recycling events.**  
Bring to events run by organizations such as Lower East Side Ecology Center, or DSNY's SAFE Disposal Events ([nyc.gov/safedisposal](http://nyc.gov/safedisposal)).
- 5 Donate or sell working electronics.**  
Visit [nyc.gov/stuffexchange](http://nyc.gov/stuffexchange) for options.

\* These programs are funded by electronics manufacturers in accordance with NY State law.

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### Recycling Options for Related Items

**mobile phones:** recycle using the options above or through any wireless service provider.

**appliances & housewares** which are mostly metal or rigid plastic: remove any batteries and recycle with other rigid plastics, metal, glass, and cartons.

**rechargeable batteries:** accepted for recycling at most stores in NY State that sell them (or products containing them).

For more info, visit [nyc.gov/recycle](http://nyc.gov/recycle).



**STATEMENT**

of the

**NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL**

Before the New York City Council's

**COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE**

Regarding

**NYC's E-WASTE POLICY: HOW THE CITY IS RAMPING UP ITS EFFORTS IN  
LIGHT OF THE 2015 DISPOSAL BAN**

Jon Krois, Esq.

December 9, 2014

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is Jon Krois, and I am an attorney with the Natural Resources Defense Council ("NRDC"). NRDC is a national, non-profit organization that has worked for more than 40 years on solid waste and environmental issues in New York. Our organization has over 1.4 million members and activists nationally, with over 39,000 supporters in New York State alone.

We have strongly supported extended producer responsibility legislation in New York City and State as the best way to create convenient recycling that keeps harmful e-waste out of our landfills and our environment. NRDC worked with the City Council and this Committee to pass the City's landmark 2008 e-waste law. As part of a coalition of stakeholders, including recyclers, local governments, and industry, we subsequently worked to pass New York State's e-waste law in 2010. Since then, we've commissioned two Product Stewardship Institute reports to study the effectiveness of that law, and we're continuing to work with a range of stakeholders including DSNY to make sure the state law works as well as it possibly can.

**D) State Collection Targets are Too Low, and We Hope the Council Will Support their Reform.**

One of the major challenges to a successful e-waste program statewide is the inadequacy of the collection targets for industry in the e-waste law. As a result of these low goals, industry hasn't been incentivized to do enough collection. Because of the particular challenges associated with e-waste collection in New York City, those structural deficiencies in the state law aggravate efforts to establish a robust collection system here. Raising and refining these goals is a key focus of our work with stakeholders, including DSNY to improve the state law. We don't want to see the costs of collection fall back on municipalities or on DSNY – this is an EPR program, and it must remain that way. We hope that we will have the Council's support in pushing for necessary reforms to the state law, including strengthened collection requirements, to ensure that manufacturers are properly encouraged to develop the most effective e-waste recycling programs both statewide and here in New York City.

**II) Convenient Collection and Public Education Also Remain Challenges to a Successful Implementation of the E-Waste Law.**

New York City faces unique challenges in implementing the e-waste law and preparing for the impending ban on disposal of e-waste in landfills beginning January 1, 2015. The most pressing issues remain convenient collection and public education. Collection options in New York City are not as convenient as they are for residents in other areas of the state. Locations are frequently not within walking distance for those without cars, and some items are too heavy to walk to a drop-off site. Most city residents do not own a vehicle and, therefore, need more



convenient access to a collection location than someone who can transport their equipment to a retail or municipal site by car.

In addition, public awareness of the electronics recycling program in the City is still low. New York City residents are not well informed about the basics of the e-waste law, such as where and how to recycle their electronics. Educational efforts to inform residents about how and where to recycle their electronic waste have not yet been successful in effectively reaching most New Yorkers. Online resources like [greenergadgets.org](http://greenergadgets.org) are available, but not well known.<sup>1</sup>

### **III) Expanding e-cycleNYC, Regular Collection Events, and Public Education are Crucial to Addressing these Challenges.**

We believe these challenges are surmountable. Through the Department of Sanitation's e-cycleNYC program and SAFE Disposal Events, the City has already laid the framework for future success. What is needed now is a commitment to expanding and refining these programs to address the issues still facing e-waste collection in the City.

The City's e-waste recycling partnership with ERI, e-cycleNYC, is an innovative step in the right direction. Giving residents the option to take their unwanted electronics to a bin downstairs in their building, rather than having to carry unwieldy, bulky e-waste to collection sites, will surely help those residents with easy access to the program adapt to the disposal ban. NRDC fully supports an expanded e-cycleNYC program as one tool for providing convenient collection.

Unfortunately, e-cycleNYC is in its infancy. To date, it has only reached hundreds of buildings in a city with almost 6,000 high rise buildings. This program needs to expand substantially and be part of a larger toolkit of solutions if it is to meet the City's needs.

One of the tools that warrants further exploration is the expansion of regular and seasonal e-waste collection events. Organizations like the Lower East Side Ecology Center run collection events around the City that have proven to be an indispensable alternative for residents. The City should consider supporting the expansion of those events directly, expanding its regular hazardous waste collection events like the Department of Sanitation's SAFE Disposal Events, and/or developing a new series of collection events specifically for e-waste.

Additionally, expanded public education must be part of the solution. The City should commit to robust public education, especially in the months following the disposal ban coming into effect.

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<sup>1</sup> See Product Stewardship Institute, [Evaluation of the New York State Electronics Producer Responsibility Law 11-14 \(2013\)](http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.productstewardship.us/resource/resmgr/imported/PSI%20Final%20Report%20to%20NRDC%2006-21-13.pdf), available at <http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.productstewardship.us/resource/resmgr/imported/PSI%20Final%20Report%20to%20NRDC%2006-21-13.pdf>.

**IV) We Support Giving the City Enforcement Authority.**

Finally, we support giving the City enforcement authority under the e-waste law. The City of Buffalo recently announced its intent to do the same. Once the disposal ban goes into effect, it will be illegal to put e-waste out in the trash – to ensure compliance, and as a way of educating the public, city-level enforcement is necessary.

\* \* \* \*

In sum, to determine whether the City is ready for the disposal ban we need to know: how the City plans to expand e-cycleNYC to meet the coming increase in demand, what the City's plans are with regards to expanding regular collection events, and how the City intends to close the public education gap on the e-waste law. We also hope we will have the Council's support in ensuring that necessary changes to the law are made.

We thank you, Chairman Reynoso, and this Committee for holding this hearing and for your steadfast commitment to recycling and extended producer responsibility. We look forward to continuing to work with you and the Council on this important issue.



Electronic Recyclers International, Inc.<sup>®</sup>



## Testimony for the NYC Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

*NYC's E-Waste Policy: How the City is Ramping Up its Efforts in Light of the 2015 Disposal Ban*

December 9, 2014

By: **Katie Reilly, Program Manager of E-Waste Legislation**  
On behalf of: **Electronic Recyclers International, Inc.**

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Good afternoon and thank you, Chairperson Reynoso and other members of the Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Committee. I also want to thank the NYC Department of Sanitation and Commissioner Garcia for their leadership on the issue of electronics recycling as well as waste and recycling issues in general. My name is Katie Reilly and I am the Program Manager of E-Waste Legislation at Electronic Recyclers International, Inc. (ERI). ERI appreciates the opportunity to present testimony today to the City Council about New York City's electronics recycling options with the upcoming ban on the disposal of electronic waste.

ERI is the largest privately held electronics recycler in the United States with the #1 market share. ERI recycles approximately 275 million pounds of electronics each year. ERI has eight strategic U.S. locations throughout the country. ERI is certified to the R2 and e-Stewards standards as well as ISO 9001, ISO 14001, and OHSAS 18001. ERI is the only recycler in the U.S. that provides in-house e-waste shredding, glass cleaning and electronics disposition, which allows us to provide the maximum customer brand protection available to ERI clients.

ERI is committed to the highest levels of environmental compliance and we pride ourselves on ERI's transparency and ERI's policy regarding zero illegal exporting of e-waste. We are able to provide the most economic and efficient structure for ERI's customers and the maximum reuse of all materials whether through refurbishment and/or recycling.

ERI is proud to be a partner with the City's NYC Department of Sanitation for its innovative e-cycleNYC program which offers pickup service in apartment buildings throughout the City as well as the collection of electronic waste at SAFE Disposal events held throughout the city.

Through our partnership with the City in about one and a half years, we have collected almost 1 million pounds of electronics. This has been through two series of SAFE Disposal events as well as our apartment building program, which began a little over one year ago. The apartment building program alone has over 450 locations enrolled and collected over a quarter of a million pounds. The program includes options for the placement of a custom electronics recycling bin that can be placed within the building and then picked up when full as well as options for a consolidation program where buildings (particularly smaller buildings) can store electronics and we will remove it once they've consolidated enough material. NYC residents have discarded a wide range of materials through the program, mainly consisting of computers, TV's and peripherals.

Our goal here in NYC is to help ensure that not only is the City prepared for the upcoming ban on the disposal of electronics, but prepared in a way that ensures responsible and safe recycling in a convenient manner. Specifically, we have increased the number of bins we have available in anticipation of an increase in the number of buildings looking to sign up for the e-cycleNYC program, we have begun to work with DSNY to plan for the increase in the number of SAFE Disposal events held throughout the city, and we are ensuring that we are prepared for increased volume coming through the city's program as well as through our retail and business collection programs.

Thank you again for allowing us the opportunity to testify, we are open for any questions that council members may have for us regarding our NYC programs and particularly our responsible and safe handling of electronics we receive.

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kathryn Garcia

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DSNY

Address: 125 WORTH ST RM 720 NY, NY  
10013

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: BRIDGET ANDERSON

Address: 44 BEAVER ST

I represent: DEPT OF SANITATION

Address: 44 BEAVER ST

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christine Datz-Romero

Address: 299 E 81st St # 22

I represent: Lower East Side Ecology Center

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 12/9/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jon Kreis

Address: 40 W 20th St Fl 11

I represent: NRDC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Katie Reilly

Address: 20 F A. NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001

I represent: Electronic Recyclers International

Address: 3 Columbus Circle, Suite 1422, New York, NY 10019

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms