

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 663

Expressing concern over the current Federal policy that allows the exportation of toxic electronic waste to developing nations, and expressing the sense of the Senate that the United States should join other developed nations and ban the exportation of toxic electronic waste to developing nations.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 17, 2008

Mr. BROWN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on Environment and Public Works

RESOLUTION

Expressing concern over the current Federal policy that allows the exportation of toxic electronic waste to developing nations, and expressing the sense of the Senate that the United States should join other developed nations and ban the exportation of toxic electronic waste to developing nations.

Whereas toxic electronic waste is generated from discarded televisions and computer monitors, computers and peripherals, audio and video equipment, wireless devices, fax and copy machines, video game consoles, and other electronic appliances and products;

Whereas televisions with cathode ray tubes (CRTs) contain between 4 and 15 pounds of lead, a toxic substance known to cause brain damage in children;

Whereas many laptops, flat panel monitors, and televisions contain fluorescent lamps that contain mercury, a dangerous neurotoxin;

Whereas many electronic products contain toxic chemicals such as lead, mercury, beryllium, cadmium, chromium, and brominated flame retardants;

Whereas approximately 2,630,000 tons of used or unwanted electronics were discarded in the United States in 2005, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);

Whereas approximately 330,000 tons of electronic waste were collected and diverted from landfills for reuse or recycling in 2005, according to the EPA;

Whereas an estimated 50 percent to 80 percent of electronic waste collected for reuse or recycling is exported to countries such as China, India, Ghana, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Thailand, according to the Department of Commerce;

Whereas approximately 131,500 tons of lead-containing CRTs were exported in 2005, representing 75 percent of the CRTs supposedly collected for recycling, according to the EPA;

Whereas Congress has required the Nation's broadcasters to convert from analog to digital broadcasting on February 17, 2009, a move which will render millions of analog CRT televisions obsolete for broadcasting and likely to be discarded;

Whereas exported electronic waste is often crudely scrapped and dismantled under conditions that are dangerous for human health and the environment in developing countries, according to eyewitness reports by the Basel Action

Network and several media outlets including National Geographic Magazine;

Whereas toxic lead from exported electronic waste has returned to the United States as a public health threat in children's jewelry made in China, according to a study by Ashland University, reported by the Wall Street Journal;

Whereas the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has issued multiple recall notices for jewelry and toys for children made in China that contained dangerous levels of lead;

Whereas 32 nations, including the member States of the European Union, have banned the export of toxic electronic waste to developing countries;

Whereas several major information technology and consumer electronics manufacturers have corporate policies that prohibit the export of toxic electronic waste to developing nations;

Whereas the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, as amended, prohibits the export of hazardous waste from the United States to other nations unless the EPA obtains prior written permission from the other nation's competent authority; and

Whereas the EPA has determined that much electronic waste is excluded or exempted from the definitions of "waste" and "hazardous waste" under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, leading to the largely unrestricted export of toxic electronic waste to developing nations: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

1 (1) expresses its concern over the current Fed-
2 eral policy that allows the exportation of toxic elec-
3 tronic waste to developing nations; and

4 (2) supports joining other developed nations
5 and banning the export of toxic electronic waste to
6 developing nations.

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