



One Hundred First Legislature - First Session - 2009
Introducer's Statement of Intent
LB 644

Chairperson: Chris Langemeier
Committee: Natural Resources
Date of Hearing: March 11, 2009

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

The purpose of LB 644 is to establish an electronic waste (e-waste) recycling program in Nebraska. LB 644 is a re-introduction of LB 986 that was introduced in 2008 by Senator Don Preister. LB 986 passed the Legislature 42 – 4 on April 17, 2008 but was vetoed by the Governor on April 21, 2008.

E-waste is the fastest growing municipal waste stream in the country; primarily in regards to outdated computers and televisions. 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. Congress has mandated that broadcasters terminate analog television broadcast transmissions and switch to digital broadcasts by June 12, 2009. The digital conversion requirement will affect the volume of televisions that need to be recycled. According to the National Association of Broadcasters 70 million television sets still rely on an analog signal for television service.

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. Since then nine states have passed Producer Responsibility e-waste legislation including 5 states in 2007. LB 644 uses the Producer Responsibility model of electronics recycling legislation. Manufacturers throughout the country support Producer Responsibility legislation in order to establish a uniform system of e-waste legislation among the states.

LB 644 establishes a tiered fee structure for manufacturers based on the quantity of televisions, computers and computers 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 Heath Mello