

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2004

H O U S E R E S O L U T I O N

**RESPECTFULLY URGING THE MERCURY REDUCTION OVERSIGHT COMMISSION TO
PREVENT MERCURY POLLUTION FROM ELECTRONIC WASTE**

Introduced By: Representatives Handy, McNamara, Naughton, Cerra, and Long

Date Introduced: February 04, 2004

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

1 WHEREAS, The Mercury Reduction Oversight Commission has the mission to prevent
2 human sources of mercury from contaminating the environment (air, water, soil); and

3 WHEREAS, The Mercury Reduction and Education Act prohibits the disposal of
4 mercury-added products by means other than recycling or hazardous waste disposal as of July
5 2005; and

6 WHEREAS, Computers, cell phones and other electronic products contain mercury as
7 well as lead, chromium, cadmium, polyvinyl chloride, mixed plastics, beryllium, brominated
8 flame retardants and other hazardous substances, and therefore pose a threat to human health and
9 the environment if improperly disposed of at the end of their useful life; and

10 WHEREAS, Electronic waste (e-waste) is a significant and growing problem for
11 governments that currently bear the burden of managing them; and

12 WHEREAS, According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, in 1997
13 more than 3.2 million tons of e-waste ended up in landfills; and

14 WHEREAS, Discarded e-waste is the fastest growing portion of the United States waste
15 stream; and

16 WHEREAS, The Central Landfill in Johnston, Rhode Island is the final resting place for
17 Rhode Island's discarded e-waste and recycling it would conserve needed landfill capacity; and

18 WHEREAS, In Rhode Island, over 4 million computers, televisions, and monitors will
19 become trash by 2011; and

1 WHEREAS, Costs for collecting and properly recycling 95% of this e-waste will cost
2 Rhode Islanders an estimated \$42 million from 2006 – 2011; and

3 WHEREAS, The full extent of the public health threat and environmental contamination
4 resulting from electronic equipment entering the waste stream through disposal into landfills or
5 incinerators is unknown, but it is estimated that seventy percent of the heavy metals in municipal
6 landfills come from electronic discards; and

7 WHEREAS, An effective electronics recycling system must be convenient and minimize
8 costs to taxpayers and to consumers of electronic products; and

9 WHEREAS, Producers of electronic products and components should be responsible for
10 ensuring proper handling, recycling and disposal of discarded products and that costs associated
11 with consolidation, handling and recycling be internalized by the manufacturers of electronic
12 products and components before the point of purchase; and

13 WHEREAS, A system of producer responsibility for the collection and recycling of
14 covered electronic devices is the most effective and equitable means of keeping this toxic waste
15 out of the landfill, alleviating the full financial and physical burden placed on the state and local
16 governments for handling e-waste, while also providing a powerful incentive for manufacturers to
17 reduce toxins and redesign products for recycling; and

18 WHEREAS, Producers of electronic devices and components should have the flexibility
19 to act in partnership with each other, with state, municipal and regional governments and with
20 businesses that provide collection and handling services to develop, implement and promote a
21 safe and effective electronics recycling system for the state; now, therefore be it

22 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
23 Providence Plantations hereby respectfully urges the Mercury Reduction Oversight Commission
24 to develop a plan to address the collection and recycling of electronic waste in a manner that is
25 convenient and minimizes costs to taxpayers and to consumers of electronic products; and be it
26 further

27 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
28 Providence Plantations hereby respectfully urges the Mercury Reduction Oversight Commission
29 to submit to the general assembly no later than January 30, 2005 a recommended plan, including
30 any legislation necessary to implement the plan, for the collection and recycling of electronic
31 waste that utilizes producer responsibility; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and he hereby is authorized and directed to
2 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Chair of the Mercury Reduction Oversight
3 Commission and all of the commission members.

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LC01299/SUB A
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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
HOUSE RESOLUTION
RESPECTFULLY URGING THE MERCURY REDUCTION OVERSIGHT COMMISSION TO
PREVENT MERCURY POLLUTION FROM ELECTRONIC WASTE

- 1 This act would require that producers of electronic waste be financially and
- 2 environmentally responsible for this waste and its disposal.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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