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Of
Interest

News Release (HQ): Environmental Protection in China Gets Legal Support From New Web SiteFrom: U.S. EPA [usaepa@govdelivery.com]
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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Environmental Protection in China Gets Legal Support from New Web Site

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(Washington, D.C. - Nov. 30, 2007) In an effort to strengthen the legal framework for environmental protection in China, EPA today launched the EPA - China Environmental Law Initiative Web site. The Web site, announced by EPA General Counsel Roger R. Martella, will provide a forum for sharing information and fostering an ongoing dialogue with China on environmental law.

China suffers severe environmental problems. Strengthening environmental laws and their implementation are seen as vital steps in improving the environment in China.

'We've learned in the United States you can't have a strong environment without strong environmental laws,' Martella said. 'The Chinese government and people have expressed a commitment to a stronger environment, and we expect that this initiative will help China realize that goal, while helping Americans better understand China's environmental laws.'

EPA is undertaking this project in Web partnership with a broad range of experts in Chinese environmental law. Collaborators in this project include the Environmental Committee of the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai, the Woodrow Wilson Center China Environment Forum, the University of Maryland Environmental Law Program, and the George Washington University Law School.

The Web site features information on new developments in Chinese environmental law, links to legal resources such as reports, articles, and the English text of many Chinese environmental laws, and an e-mail update service.

The URL for the web site is: http://www.epa.gov/ogc/china/initiative_home.htm
portions of the Web site have been translated into Chinese and are available on the EPA Chinese Portal:
<http://www.epa.gov/chinese/simple/initiative.html>

Sound bite: http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/names/hq_2007-11-30_chinalegal

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castoffs) is very much a part of the African landscape.

Entrepreneurs set up used clothing stalls, and savvy locals shop for desired fashions. The market is fickle, so supply and demand controls prices. Shirts might demand higher prices, not because of the designer label, as it might in the U.S., but because of the bright colors or more appropriate sizes (many country's citizens have much smaller waists, in general, than our well-fed American population). And in some countries, men are more apt to wear Western clothing and women are more apt to cling to traditional dress styles.

Occasionally, some of the old clothes are re-designed into new clothing and accessories. Though uncommon in the U.S., this trend has been fashionable in Europe for quite a while and evidence shows that the trend is growing here. A company in Dallas makes new fashions from old textiles, selling the finished products to companies throughout the country.

The specialized vintage and collectible market comprises about two percent of all the sorted goods handled by for-profit processors. These clothes are sought

by markets desiring American collectibles, such as Japan. These items can bring a premium price in certain markets, including collectibles worn by celebrities, or designs studied and knocked-off by couture designers. Some designers even have collections of vintage goods in their boutiques.

textiles in their mix of recycled goods. Although many consumers enthusiastically recycle aluminum cans, glass containers and plastic jugs, there is no pro-ecol for old clothes.

While many consumers take wearable clothing to charities, many communities do not know that they can order recycling bins from for-profit companies. Awareness is the biggest barrier to keeping communities from starting their own textile recycling programs.

As consumers continually shift attitudes toward environmentalism, thus embracing recycled goods in the marketplace, they also must lobby municipalities to add textiles as a recycling option. To recycle successfully, everyone must embrace the system, not just make an occasional charitable contribution.

Product engineers must continue developing new value-added markets, and methods of marketing the end-use products and possibilities, so the system functions at full capacity. Bottom line, consumers, municipalities, product engineers and charities must be challenged to continue placing textiles in the mix of important recyclable products.

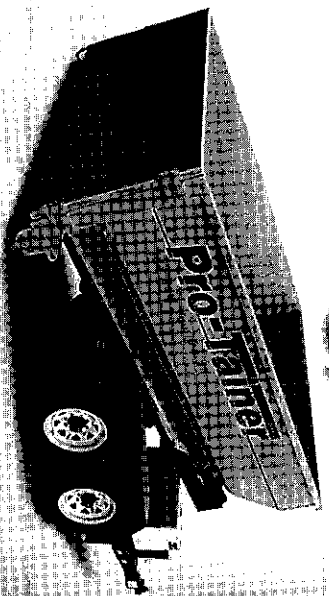
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Awareness is the biggest barrier to keeping communities from starting their own textile recycling programs.

Conscious change

The good news is that textiles and apparel are nearly 100-percent recyclable. The problem stems from the fact that many consumers are unaware that a viable textile re-use and recycling industry even exists. The problem is further compounded by the fact that municipalities and recycling collectors often do not have

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Office products retailer launches e-waste program

Joe Truini

Manufacturer, retail and municipal electronic scrap collection programs continue to pop up in the absence of a national recycling system, but they may not get the job done alone.

This month, Office Depot Inc. launched an electronics recycling program at all of its North American retail locations. Consumers can recycle all sorts of electronics, from digital cameras to small televisions and computers.

The retailer's Tech Recycling Service is available at more than 1,100 Office Depot stores. Customers can recycle personal electronics by buying the appropriate-sized Tech Recycling Box at Office Depot stores. The boxes sell for \$5, \$10 and \$15 and can be filled with up to 60 pounds of electronic scrap. The price includes shipping and handling.

Customers take the box home and fill it with used electronic devices, including cords and cables, and return the unsealed box to the store.

"Office Depot is committed to bringing value and innovation to our customers," said Chuck Rubin, president of Office Depot's North American retail division.

Office Depot piloted the program in 2006 at some 100 U.S. stores, recycling more than 108,000 pounds of electronic products.

"Office Depot's environmental vision is to increasingly buy green, be green and sell green," said Yalmaz Siddiqui, environmental strategy advisor for Office Depot.

Matt Hale, director of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Solid Waste, applauded the company for helping to keep electronics out of the waste stream and conserving natural resources such as copper and aluminum.

"Any program that anybody puts together voluntarily will help," said Marc Pearl, executive director of the Consumer Electronics Recycling Coalition.

But that group is still calling for federal legislation to address electronic waste in a uniform manner. A federal system also goes beyond collection, touching on content and design and certification of electronic waste processors, Pearl said.

"When we've called for a federal approach, it's not just on a collection program, it's on a comprehensive electronic management system," he said.

It costs more for manufacturers and retailers to implement collection and recycling programs, and other competitors could get a financial leg up on them by not adopting their own, Pearl said. A federally mandated program would even the playing field.

"You don't want a one-size-fits-all, but you do want to be able to encourage the people to do the right thing," he said.

Contact Waste News reporter Joe Truini at (330) 865-6166 or jtruini@crain.com

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Analogue's epilogue

Bruce Geiselman

Reno, Nev. --

Solid waste officials and electronics recyclers will be overwhelmed in 2008 and 2009 with residents' discarding outdated televisions unless officials quickly develop strategies and adequate infrastructure to handle the "coming storm," according to several speakers at Wastecon.

Several conference attendees said they weren't aware of the coming change that could spark the wave of TV discards - Federal Communications Commission rules that will require TV broadcasters to abandon traditional analog broadcasts in favor of digital signals beginning Feb. 17, 2009.

The change means most televisions in use today won't work unless owners purchase converter boxes to receive digital broadcasts or connect their TVs to a cable or satellite service.

Twenty-five percent

Linda McFarland, CEO of Classic Computer Recovery Inc. of Garden City, Mich., and Thomas Drake, CEO of 5R Processors Ltd., of Ladysmith, Wis., said they estimated that one in four households will dispose of or recycle at least one television within the next two years as a result of the change.

However, that doesn't tell the full story, she said.

"Something that is not part of the one in four households are the hotels and hospitals," McFarland said. "We're in Reno. Look at how many hotels there are, and in every hotel room there is a TV. Look at Vegas - you don't even want to see the numbers that are going to come out of Vegas."

The federal government, in an effort to assist consumers and stem the tide of electronic waste, will offer coupons for \$40 discounts on the purchase of converter boxes that will allow traditional TVs to continue operating past the February 2009 deadline. However, the \$1.5 billion allocated for the program will provide coupons to only 37.5 million of the nation's 114 million households, McFarland said.

An anticipated Christmas 2008 advertising blitz by TV makers and falling prices on digital televisions will fuel the movement to dump analog TVs, she said.

The expected result will be the rapid disposal of more than 28.5 million TVs - enough to fill 148,000 semi-trucks, Drake said. That would equal almost 1 million tons, or 6.5 million cubic yards, of electronic waste, he said.

Planning ahead

Communities need to decide sooner rather than later whether they want that waste flowing into their landfills or going to electronics recyclers, both recyclers said. The volume is more than could be handled today, they agreed.

Sending the TVs to landfills would have numerous negative consequences, they argued. It would send tens of millions or hundreds of millions of pounds of arsenic, beryllium, cadmium, hexavalent chromium, lead and mercury into the nation's landfills, they said.

While sending the TVs to landfills might be the cheaper alternative in the short run, it "hides the pollution" and creates a potential cleanup problem for future generations, Drake said. In addition, it will fill up dwindling landfill space in many areas of the country, he said.

McFarland and Drake both urged cities and counties to instead opt for recycling. However, they cautioned that recyclers won't do the

work for free.

"What we haven't figured out, and we probably never will, is the lead-based glass portion of it," McFarland said. "We can't make money on monitors and TVs and recycle them properly."

Who will pay?

While recyclers often can recycle some electronics without cost to consumers, it could cost recyclers upwards of \$20 per television for recycling, McFarland said.

Several solid waste officials in the audience expressed frustration, asking where the recyclers thought the money would come from.

McFarland recommended that solid waste authorities charge residents \$20 for each television set they dispose of, and put pressure on the FCC to chip in \$4 for every analog TV recycled.

Some solid waste officials, however, argued that residents would refuse to pay the fees, and problems such as illegal dumping of electronic waste would result.

Regardless of the disposal method chosen, cities and counties will face costs, McFarland said. Treating the TVs as solid waste will involve costs including landfill tipping fees and hauling, she said.

By contrast, she argued that charging residents for recycling the sets could generate revenue for local governments and "solve the e-waste problem."

Sharing the load

Drake echoed many of McFarland's comments, and added that communities need to develop partnerships with TV manufacturers, asking them to take "co-responsibility" for recovery of their products at the end of their life cycle.

Drake said local governments also have a responsibility to educate and convince the public of the environmental and economic benefits of recycling televisions.

Developing the recycling infrastructure to handle the anticipated wave of TV discards could create 3,200 jobs, Drake estimated.

Contact Waste News government affairs editor Bruce Geiselman at (330) 865-6172 or bgeiselman@crain.com

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Bright ideas

Joe Truini

From freebies to discount coupons, a federal program promoting the use of the lights has generated a nationwide buzz and created several industry and public partnerships, including one pilot recycling program.

The Energy Star Change a Light, Change the World campaign, which kicked off Oct. 5, has switched on the cooperation among companies across many sectors.

The joint effort between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy encourages consumers to change at least one standard light bulb in their home to an Energy Star-qualified compact fluorescent bulb.

Utilities, retailers, light manufacturers and others are making it easy for consumers by offering customers significantly discounted, and even free, compact fluorescent bulbs. And one utility even has launched a pilot recycling programs to recovered spent CFLs.

Commonwealth Edison Co., a unit of Chicago-based Exelon Corp., is partnering with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to offer compact fluorescent light collection and recycling at some 150 northern Illinois Ace Hardware stores through Dec. 31.

ComEd also is offering discounted compact fluorescent bulbs at more than 350 hardware and home improvement store locations throughout northern Illinois. Customers can buy up to a dozen bulbs, saving \$2 on each. The promotion also lasts through Dec. 31.

The recycling pilot will help keep even the minute amounts of mercury in compact fluorescent lights out of the environment by properly disposing of them, said Doug Scott, director of the IEPA.

"This recycling partnership answers the main environmental issues surrounding the use of CFL bulbs," he said.

Wal-Mart Stores Inc. already has surpassed its goal to sell 100 million compact fluorescent lights by the end of 2007. The company plans to introduce its own private label bulb under the Great Value brand, which will offer four bulbs for the price of three.

"We love the CFL and see the power this product has to unite consumers in the struggle against climate change," said Andy Ruben, vice president of strategy and sustainability.

The Bentonville, Ark.-based retailer estimated each bulb can cut as much as \$30 over its lifetime on utility bills. In total, Wal-Mart customers could save some \$3 billion on electricity.

Over their lifetime, the 100 million CFLs will conserve the energy needed to power 450,000 homes and reduce emissions as much as taking 700,000 cars from the road, according to the company.

Wal-Mart is teaming up with Duke Energy Corp. and General Electric Co. to give Duke Energy utility customers in Ohio \$3 off of three packs of GE compact fluorescent bulbs. Duke will cover the cost of the promotion as part of its overall energy efficiency efforts, said Sandra Meyer, president of Duke Energy Ohio.

Georgia Power, a subsidiary of Atlanta-based Southern Co., held an employee energy efficiency fair at its headquarters as part of a statewide pledge program. The company also is encouraging CFL use by giving its customers a free bulb when they complete and turn in a Change a Light pledge card. The company expects to give away more than 100,000 bulbs during the promotion, which runs through November.

"These bulbs are not only energy efficient but also last much longer than standard bulbs, so switching to them is a great way to lower monthly utility bills over the long haul," said Chris Wornack, executive vice president of external affairs for Georgia Power.

On the West Coast, Pacific Gas and Electric Co. plans to give away one million compact fluorescent lights during October, which is National Energy Awareness Month. More than 1,000 PG&E employee volunteers will distribute bulbs at about 300 events in northern

"We are thrilled to continue our partnership with the communities we serve as we begin this grassroots effort to promote energy efficiency," said Brad Whitcomb, vice president of customer products and services for San Francisco-based PG&E.

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