The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

February 5, 2009

Representative Tara Sad, Chairman
Environment and Agriculture Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 303
Concord, NH 03301

SUBJECT: HB 338, An act relative to definitions of electronic waste.

Dear Chairman Sad and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 338. This legislation seeks to include computers and video playing/recording devices in the list of electronic waste ("e-waste") that is banned from disposal in landfills and incinerators in New Hampshire. The Department of Environmental Services (Department) supports this bill because it promotes recycling, conserves natural resources and landfill capacity, and reduces the risk of releasing contaminants to our air and water.

Nationally, 2.25 million tons of e-waste were discarded in 2007. Of this amount, less than 18% was recycled. The rest was disposed of in landfills and incinerators. 2007 was the first year of the New Hampshire ban on disposal of video display devices, and it is likely that New Hampshire's recycling rate was higher than the national average. Computers and video recording devices contain recyclable materials such as plastics, steel and other metals. They also contain significant amounts of lead and other materials that can leach out of the device under landfill conditions or can be emitted to the atmosphere if disposed of in an incinerator. They are also not readily compactable and therefore can occupy a considerable amount of landfill space.

Many of the electronics manufacturing companies and the electronics retailers have set up recycling programs for electronic waste. On their own, they have taken responsibility for their products at end of life. Through these programs and collection programs run by municipalities at local transfer stations, most citizens of our state have convenient access to e-waste recycling opportunities. Because of this, the consumer should experience little, if any, impact if these products are banned from disposal in landfills and incinerators.

The Department encourages passage of HB 338. If you have any questions regarding this letter of testimony, please do not hesitate to contact Mike Wimsatt, Waste Management Division Director at 271-2905, or me at 271-2958.

Sincerely,

Thomas S. Burack

Thomas Burack
Commissioner

cc: Michael J. Wimsatt, P.G., Director, Waste Management Division

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