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**Contact: Jason Butkowski**  
**(609) 292-5215**

## **SMITH RECYCLING PACKAGE APPROVED IN SENATE**

TRENTON – A pair of bills sponsored by Senator Bob Smith which would guarantee funding for municipal recycling programs and create a statewide electronics recycling initiative were approved by the Senate today.

“New Jersey was once a national leader in our efforts to promote recycling, but have since fallen to the back of the pack,” said Senator Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset, the Chair of the Senate Environment Committee. “We need to do more to reenergize our State’s recycling profile, and ensure sustainable, effective programs to deal with new trends in recycled waste. These bills would put the Garden State back on the right track, and ensure a greener legacy to impart to future generations of State residents.”

The first bill in the package, S-554, would create a Statewide electronic waste management program for computers and televisions. Under the compromise legislation, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) would collect a registration fee on television manufacturers currently selling new televisions in New Jersey to fund county- and state-based TV recycling efforts. Recycling of computer equipment would be managed by computer manufacturers, under plans approved by the DEP.

“Electronics recycling poses one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century,” said Senator Smith. “As technology expands, today’s home electronics are becoming obsolete at a much faster rate, and tons of recyclable material is entering the State’s waste stream every year. Through this legislation, we will take the first step to addressing this problem, and develop one of the most comprehensive efforts to electronic recycling in the nation.”

Senator Smith noted that removing computers and televisions from the waste stream will also ensure that certain toxic chemicals don’t find their way into New Jersey’s groundwater, soil and air.

“I’ve seen estimates of up to 12 million pounds of lead that are disposed of each year due to our inaction in recycling obsolete electronics,” said Senator Smith. “In addition, many of these devices contain chromium, mercury, cadmium and other toxic chemicals. We need a safer alternative than letting these devices rust in a landfill, jeopardizing the environmental quality of the surrounding area.”

The bill was approved by a vote of 22-16. It was approved by the Assembly earlier in the day by a vote of 52-27, and now heads to the Governor to be signed into law.

The second bill in the package, S-557, would impose a recycling tax on solid waste generation in order to provide financial support to municipalities and counties for local recycling programs. The tax would be levied on the owner or operator of every solid waste facility in the State at a rate of \$3.00 per ton on all solid waste accepted for disposal or transfer at the facility. The tax would not be imposed on facilities designated as “sanitary” landfills or facilities associated with the recycling process, and is similar to a \$3 per ton recycling tax which was in place from 1987 to 1996.

The new recycling tax is estimated to raise approximately \$23 million annually for recycling efforts in the State. Sixty percent of funds collected, or \$13.8 million, would go to municipalities or counties as direct recycling grants. A quarter of the revenue, or \$5.75 million, would go to continue to help with preparing and implementing their solid waste plans. Ten percent, or \$2.3 million, would go to the State recycling program, and five percent, or \$1.2 million, would go to the counties for public information and education programs on recycling.

“It seems only appropriate that we seek to bolster recycling funding from a surcharge on landfills,” said Senator Smith. “This is a tax which won’t be felt by most New Jersey residents, and would

provide dedicated, sustainable funding for New Jersey's recycling efforts. This legislation is a double-win for New Jersey's recycling programs, and would ensure we continue funding recycling efforts well into the future."

The bill was approved by the Senate by a vote of 26-11. It was approved by the Assembly earlier in the day by a vote of 49-29 with 2 abstentions, and now heads to the Governor to be signed into law.