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## **SMITH RECYCLING PACKAGE SIGNED INTO LAW**

TRENTON - A pair of bills sponsored by Senator Bob Smith which will guarantee funding for municipal recycling programs and create a statewide electronics recycling initiative were signed into law by Governor Corzine over the weekend.

"Once upon a time, New Jersey was the national leader in promoting recycling efforts among its citizens," said Senator Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset, the Chair of the Senate Environment Committee. "However, we've become far too lax in recent years, and have dropped to the bottom of the pack in terms of recycling success. With these laws in place, we're poised to reclaim the crown, protect the quality of our natural environment, and preserve natural resources."

The first bill in the package, S-554, will create a Statewide electronic waste management program for computers and televisions. Under the compromise legislation, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will 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 will be managed by computer manufacturers, under plans approved by the DEP.

"This law takes the best of both worlds, creating a recycling program which merges the computer industry's successful manufacturer-responsibility model with a well-financed government-run program for TVs," said Senator Smith. "With this new law in place, we will be able to remove tons of electronic waste from the State's waste stream, and salvage and reuse existing components, as opposed to using new resources."

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.

"According to figures I've seen, the obsolete electronic devices which are thrown in the trash each year contain up to 12 million pounds of lead," said Senator Smith. "Many of these devices also contain chromium, mercury, cadmium and other toxic chemicals. This law will give us a safer, cleaner alternative than letting these devices rust away in our State's landfills, spilling dangerous pollutants into our environment."

The second bill in the package, S-557, will impose a recycling tax on solid waste generation in order to provide financial support to municipalities and counties for local recycling programs. The tax will 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 new recycling tax is estimated to raise approximately \$34 million annually for recycling efforts in the State. Sixty percent of funds collected, or \$20.4 million, will go to municipalities or counties as direct recycling grants. A quarter of the revenue, or \$8.5 million, will go to continue to help with preparing and implementing their solid waste plans. Ten percent, or \$3.4 million, will be split evenly between the State's recycling program, and counties public information and education programs on recycling. The remaining five percent, or \$1.7 million, will be utilized for recycling research to expand the materials recycled in the State.

"When we repealed the recycling tax in the 1990's, that spelled the end of our State's recycling success," said Senator Smith. "Without proper funding, all the recycling laws on the books, and the best-intentioned efforts of public officials to promote recycling, are for naught. However, dedicated recycling funding, collected from a tax which the average citizen will never feel, will revitalize our State's recycling efforts and ensure a greener future for the Garden State."

Both bills were approved by the Legislature earlier in the month, in the closing days of the 212th Legislative Session.