



Waste Bytes! Diverting Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment in Ontario – New report pushes for maximum diversion of Ontario's electronic waste

(Toronto, January 23, 2008) Today, the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy (CIELAP) released *Waste Bytes! Diverting Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment in Ontario*.

While commending the Ontario government for launching the Ontario Electronic Stewardship (OES) process to divert electronic waste from landfill, the CIELAP report calls on the Ontario government to ensure that OES' industry-funded program has clear and aggressive diversion targets for reuse and recycling. OES faces a March 31, 2008 deadline to finalize its Program plan for diverting electronic waste in the province. Comments on the initial draft plan are invited from the public until February 4, 2008.

“Disposing of electronic wastes such as old computers, cell phones, televisions and even i-Pods is a huge and growing problem. It is estimated that over 14,500,000 units of e-waste were discarded in Ontario in 2004, of which only around 9% were collected for reuse or recycling. This waste stream is growing at around 3–5% each year”, stated Anne Mitchell, Executive Director of CIELAP. “Waste electronic and electrical equipment (WEEE) contain toxic and hazardous substances, including mercury, PCBs, PBDE, and cadmium. Waste of this type needs to be responsibly disposed of. Unsophisticated disposal of WEEE takes up scarce landfill space and ignores the reuse and recycling opportunities.”

In *Waste Bytes! Diverting Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment in Ontario* (available at www.cielap.org), CIELAP makes the following key recommendations to the Ontario government and OES:

- 1) *Ontario should develop ambitious collection, reuse and recycling targets for electronic waste that aim to achieve significantly greater diversion than a business-as-usual scenario.*
- 2) *Ontario's waste electronics diversion Program should prioritize diversion activities: (a) to reduce waste generation in the first place; (b) to repair equipment so that it can be reused; (c) to reuse material components; and (d) to recycle the materials. The Program should maximize diversion at each level.*
- 3) *The Ontario government should bring in regulatory requirements and work with Canadian stewards to reduce the toxicity of electronic products. The government should also encourage producers to accept greater responsibility for the design, manufacture and sale of these products, including take-back programs.*

Maureen Carter-Whitney, CIELAP's Research Director and report co-author, states that “It is encouraging that industry players will soon have to demonstrate greater responsibility for the waste generated through production but also begin to undertake stewardship for the appropriate disposal of the products. We trust that oversight of the OES program will ensure its potential is realized.”

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For more information or to arrange interviews, contact Carolyn Webb at 416-923-3529 ext 26.

Copies of the 40-page Report and a Quick Facts sheet are both available at www.cielap.org.

Founded in 1970, the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy (CIELAP) is an independent environmental law and policy research and education organization.