

1 COMMITTEE: Environment

2 POLICY: Cradle to Grave Electronics Management (*Joint policy*
3 *with Communications, Financial Services and Interstate*
4 *Commerce Committee*)

5 TYPE OF POLICY: Existing

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7 NCSL has long recognized that technology and technology equipment are important and
8 essential to US participation in the global economy. NCSL has long recognized the need to
9 manage solid waste in an environmentally, economically, and politically acceptable manner.
10 As outlined in its Solid Waste Management policy, NCSL believes that source reduction and
11 recycling offer the most economically and environmentally sound methods for dealing with a
12 significant percentage of the solid waste stream.

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14 An ever growing segment of the solid waste stream is comprised of discarded electronic
15 equipment. Such electronic waste or e-waste is entering the national waste stream at an
16 increasing rate due to a number of contributing factors. These include the expanding
17 pervasiveness of electronics, rapid technological advances and the subsequently shorter
18 lifespan of electronics technologies and a large inventory of obsolete electronics.

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20 The exponential growth of this segment of the waste stream has brought a new urgency to
21 the discussion of electronics life-cycle management. According to the International
22 Association of Electronics Recyclers (IAER) approximately 3 billion units will be scrapped
23 during the rest of this decade. However, only a small percentage of the scrapped units are
24 being recycled according to recent studies. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has
25 estimated that in 2003 alone, about 50 million existing computers became obsolete; of these,
26 one source estimates, only a small percentage were recycled. Also urgent, is the need to
27 take steps expeditiously to limit the effect of hazardous substances on public health.

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29 NCSL supports efforts to increase the amount of electronic material that is removed from the
30 waste stream and diverted from landfills. The disincentives for reuse and recycling of such
31 electronics scrap or e-scrap must be examined and mitigated by all relevant stakeholders.

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32 NCSL encourages the full cooperation and assistance of the federal government in state
33 efforts to promote responsible product stewardship and encourage the development of an
34 infrastructure necessary to support the widespread recovery of a broad range of electronic
35 equipment. Any legislative or regulatory action taken at the federal level must recognize the
36 importance of a state-federal partnership in managing the current stream of end-of-life
37 electronics and promote future product stewardship of electronic equipment.

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