



WHEREAS:

Amazon.com Inc. is the second largest online retailer of consumer electronics, and such devices contain toxic materials such as lead, mercury, cadmium, brominated flame retardants, polyvinyl chloride, and are difficult to recycle.

Less than 20% of discarded electronics are collected for recycling, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. E-waste is the fastest growing and most hazardous component of the municipal waste stream, comprising more than 5%. The estimated collection rate for e-waste lags the U.S. recovery rate for all municipal waste of 34%.

Improper disposal of electronics can result in serious public health and environmental impacts. Analog TV sets and monitors with cathode ray tubes contain large amounts of lead, flat screen monitors contain mercury switches, and computer batteries contain cadmium, which can be harmful to human health if released to the environment.

The company does offer recycling service for its Kindle product, but not for the myriad other kinds of electronics it sells online. The "Innovation for our Planet" section of the Amazon.com website says "we're constantly looking for ways to further reduce our environmental impact," yet there's no apparent option for consumers who have end-of-life materials to safely and conveniently recycle them through Amazon.com. By contrast Dell Inc., another large online electronics retailer, provides shipping labels and offers free recycling for all products it sells. Customers may also drop off computer equipment in any condition at more than 2,000 participating Goodwill store locations. Electronics retailer Best Buy takes back a wide variety of electronics for free and Staples and Office Depot also offer take back. Best Buy has collected and recycled 180 million pounds of electronics in the last three years. Proponents believe our company should develop an in-store take back program using stores or nearby locations convenient for customers.

Electronic goods collected for recycling in the U.S. are often shipped by recyclers to developing countries where they endanger health and the environment. *Reports by* Basel Action Network revealed appalling conditions in China and parts of Africa where migrant workers break apart and process old electronic equipment under primitive conditions. Electronics collected by our company should be recycled or refurbished by responsible electronics recyclers who are independently verified to meet a leading certification standard such as the e-Stewards standard.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That Amazon.com's board of directors prepare a report, at reasonable cost and excluding confidential information, on policy options to provide mechanisms for take back of electronics, promotion of reuse of working equipment and to prevent improper export of hazardous e-waste and untested or non-working equipment.