

Resolution #2025-03

A resolution supporting a Statewide Electronics Product Stewardship Program.

WHEREAS, waste management is an essential government service provided by local governments to protect public health, control blight, and provide quality of life; and

WHEREAS, Alaskans generate over 15 million pounds annually of spent electronics that require expensive and specialized waste management resources and incur a significant future municipal cost through hastened need for capital funding of landfill closure and new site planning; and

WHEREAS, electronics contain toxic chemicals harmful to human health and subsistence resources, such as lead, cadmium, mercury, flame retardants, and PFAS, and these chemicals leach out as the landfilled electronics age, potentially flowing to nearby land, creeks, ponds, rivers, and bays that provide drinking water and important subsistence resources; and

WHEREAS, Class II and III rural landfills serve a third of all Alaskans, are unique to Alaska due to engineering and economy of scale considerations and are not designed to contain this leachate; and

WHEREAS, at least 150 communities are within one mile of their Class III landfill, where burning waste in passive steel containers called burnboxes is a common least-cost waste management strategy through which residents can be exposed to product chemicals; and

WHEREAS, electronics are proposed to be listed as a hazardous waste under the pending State of Alaska Hazardous Waste Program, potentially increasing the cost of electronics disposal; and

WHEREAS, 27 states have Product Stewardship laws that result in electronics manufacturers paying for all or part of their state's electronics recycling with residents in those states experiencing no associated increase in the cost for their electronics; and

WHEREAS, a Statewide Electronics Product Stewardship Program can be implemented without the levy of fees, taxes, or Alaska retail business burden; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska can develop a Product Stewardship program without administrative cost to the State, and municipalities are not beholden to participate in, or administer, the Program.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports a comprehensive statewide Product Stewardship Program for electronic recycling to substantially reduce local and regional government waste management costs as well as public health risks to their constituency.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 13, 2024.