

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**California E-Waste Bill Fails Producer Responsibility Test,
Claims Bi-National Environmental, Labor Coalition**

A bill signed today by California Governor Gray Davis, Senate Bill 20, fails the 'producer responsibility test,' according to the EPR Working Group, a coalition of U.S. and Canadian environmental, labor, toxics and environmental justice organizations promoting effective Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).

The Working Group recently developed a checklist of Essential Elements of Effective EPR Programs, based on successful programs in Europe, Japan and other parts of the world. EPR is a policy framework that extends brand owners' responsibilities to include responsibility for life cycle costs of their products and associated packaging, with the goal of spurring better environmental design.

The California e-waste bill provides the first opportunity to apply the Working Group's principles to policy that is moving in the U.S. After the European Union adopted regulations requiring all brand owners of all electronic and electrical products to pay for taking them back at end of life, a number of states and provinces in North America have been considering similar legislation. Attention has focused especially on California after the governor vetoed an electronics waste bill in 2002, saying he wanted to see producers take more responsibility for their products, like in Europe.

"Based on these principles the bill fails miserably," said EPR Working Group member Helen Spiegelman. "It is a traditional recycling program, financed with a tax and managed by government."

The EPR Working Group published a report card today that evaluates SB 20 in terms of the essential elements of its checklist. With a grade of Fail or Qualified Fail on eight of the eleven elements, SB 20 was given a final grade of "Fail."

A bright spot is that the bill is consistent with European requirements in mandating phase-outs of hazardous materials.

However, failing grades were given to SB 20 for not holding producers responsible for financing or running programs; leaving out most electronic products; not adequately controlling exports of used electronics; lacking incentives for green design; and depending on consumer financing for clean-up legacy waste, among other problems.

The Report Card on SB 20 and EPR Principles are posted at www.EPRWorkingGroup.org .
See also www.computertakeback.com.

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