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Finally, A Responsible Way to Get Rid of that Old Computer!

Electronics Recyclers Pledge: "No Export, No Dumping, No Prisons"

Seattle, WA and San Jose, CA, February 25, 2003. Fifteen private electronics recycling firms representing 21 facilities throughout North America announced today that they have joined forces with environmental organizations and agreed to uphold the world's most rigorous environmental and social criteria for the dismantling and recycling of electronic wastes (e-waste). The criteria are contained in the landmark "*Electronic Recycler's Pledge of True Stewardship**" that was developed in conjunction with members of the Computer TakeBack Campaign, including the Basel Action Network (BAN), and the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition (SVTC).

"We are frustrated by the failure of the federal government and electronics manufacturers to move quickly enough to create a truly environmentally sound recycling program to deal with the current e-waste crisis," said Bobby Farris, Environmental Service Manager of Resource Concepts Inc. one of the pledging companies, located in Carrollton, Texas. "So, together with some key environmental organizations we voluntarily agreed to meet a stringent standard of operation that sets a high bar for responsible recycling."

Under the Banner of "*No Export, No Dumping, No Prisons*" the signatory companies have all agreed, among other requirements, to:

- prevent hazardous e-waste from going to municipal incinerators or landfills;
- prevent the export of hazardous e-waste to developing countries;
- use free-market rather than prison labor to dismantle or recycle e-waste.

"It's a time to celebrate a coming-out party for computer waste," said Jim Puckett of BAN. "Finally, we are able to tell consumers it is safe to take that old computer and monitor out of the closet, attic or garage, and send it to a company that has agreed to be among the most responsible recyclers in the entire industry."

Today's launch of the "*Electronic Recycler's Pledge of True Stewardship*" was inspired by, and marks the one year anniversary of, the release of the report "*Exporting Harm: The High-Tech Trashing of Asia*," by BAN and SVTC. That report sent shock waves throughout the electronics and electronics recycling industries with its disturbing revelation that 50% to 80% of electronic waste collected for recycling in North America was actually

being sent by so-called recyclers and brokers to developing countries such as China, India and Pakistan, where the wastes were simply dumped in the environment or recycled in very toxic and polluting operations resulting in occupational disease.

Additionally, due to the widespread use of the toxic substances such as lead, mercury, chlorine and bromine in electronic products, there is great concern about dumping e-waste into municipal solid waste systems where the toxins can leach into groundwater from landfills or be released by incinerator emissions or ash. Increasingly local governments, relying on shrinking taxpayer dollars, are forced to grapple with protecting their local communities from e-waste pollution. The pledge also targets the increasing use of prison labor, which according to the environmentalists and recyclers, undercuts free market businesses and amounts to an inappropriate government subsidy.

“Manufacturers must design products that can be easily recycled and upgraded, and which aren’t toxic to workers or the environment,” said Ted Smith of the Silicon Toxics Coalition. “As long as electronic waste continues to be dumped with few costs or liabilities, producers have little incentive to alter the design of electronic products to remove toxic components and allow them to be recycled more efficiently.”

By calling for a closing-off of what they call the "cheap and dirty" legal outlets for e-waste, the recyclers and their environmental allies hope to both prod governments to legislate similar criteria and at the same time establish a market for doing the right thing.

"We firmly believe there is a large market of consumers out there – both institutional as well as individual – who want to ensure that their old computer doesn't wind up in the local landfill or in a rice paddy in China," said David Wood of GrassRoots Recycling Network.

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*For a copy of the Pledge and for detailed information about the pledge and the companies signing it, visit the websites:

BAN -- www.ban.org,
SVTC -- www.svtc.org,
CTBC – www.computertakeback.com

The founding companies upholding the pledge (as of February 25, 2003) are:

- **Asset Recovery Corp.**, St. Paul, MN -- www.assetrecoverycorp.com
- **Cascade Asset Management**, Madison, WI -- www.cascade-assets.com

- **Hackett Electronics**, San Jose, CA -- www.hackettelec.com
- **Maxim Industries**, Ft. Lauderdale, FL -- www.4scrap.com
- **Maxus Technology Inc.**, Calgary, Alberta -- www.maxustech.com
- **PC Salvage LLC.**, Lakewood, WA -- www.allaboutpcsalvage.com
- **ReCellular Inc.**, Ann Arbor, MI; Miami, FL; Dexter, MI -- www.recellular.com,
www.wirelessrecycling.com
- **RE-PC**, Seattle, WA. -- www.repc.com
- **Resource Concepts**, Carrollton, TX – www.resourcecon.com
- **RetroSystems**, Calgary/Edmonton, Alberta -- www.retrosystems.com
- **Scientific Recycling, Inc.**, Holmen, WI -- www.scientificrecycling.com
- **Total Reclaim**, Seattle, WA -- www.totalreclaim.com
- **trueCycle**, Pasadena, CA -- www.truecycle.com
- **United DataTech**, Santa Clara, CA, -- www.uniteddatatech.com
- **Zak Enterprises**, Santa Clara, CA -- www.zakenterprises.com