

# TRACKING FOR

BASEL ACTION NETWORK  
2015-16 BIENNIAL REPORT

# TRANSPARENCY



turn back the toxic tide



## MISSION

*To champion global environmental health and justice by eliminating toxic trade, catalyzing a toxics-free future, and campaigning for everyone's right to a flourishing environment*



## VISION

*A bright future where we live harmoniously with ourselves, our technology, and our precious planet*

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## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*Jim Puckett holding tracking device found in Hong Kong electronic junk yard.  
© PBS. 2016*

Dear Friends:

In the last two years, BAN's work to increase transparency and accountability to promote global environmental justice has been groundbreaking and pivotal. Our pioneering e-Trash Transparency Project which employed 205 GPS tracking devices placed into consumer e-waste and then delivered to recyclers and charities, has succeeded in producing the first real data on the flows of e-waste moving from the United States to developing countries; and in doing so, we have begun to make real strides in eliminating this problem.

With this new data, we have finally put to rest claims by some that the international dumping of e-waste was no longer a problem. Indeed, our research, conducted in 2015 and published in 2016, showed clearly that from the United States, global dumping of our old electronics represents a serious environmental and human health problem. We discovered that 40% of the printers, LCDs, and CRTs released to "so-called" recyclers were simply shipped to developing countries to a fate of dangerous and polluting "recycling" in informal e-waste junkyards.

We discovered a whole new region that is the new ground zero for e-waste — New Territories in the north part of Hong Kong. The US exports revealed a pattern of

habitual fraud and greenwashing on the part of the exporting companies. Many had websites that boasted they were certified, governmental approved, and even cited policies against the very exports we caught them engaged in. The export rate of trackers delivered to R2 Certified companies (48%) was even higher than the export rate of uncertified companies (37%).

We are proud to say that our research has already been the subject of several films and has already begun to spur real action to forestall and prosecute these unethical and damaging global dumping practices. Please read further in this report to learn about some of the major strides forward — all due to our e-Trash Transparency Project.

In closing, I wish to thank all of our supporters for making our truly unique work possible. Even though BAN is a small organization, with your continuing support we remain a force to be reckoned with, in the most important campaign of all — making our environment great again!

Sincerely yours,

Jim Puckett





## HIDDEN E-WASTE DUMPING — REVEALED

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For over a decade now, BAN has reported to CBS's 60 Minutes, National Geographic, New York Times, National Public Radio and many other media outlets around the world that a large proportion of the old computers, printers, monitors and cell phones of consumers and businesses were not being recycled by those claiming to do so in developed countries, but were instead exported to developing countries.

We first exposed much of these wastes leaving US ports and moving via Hong Kong to a little-known town in China known as Guiyu, and later we revealed exports via Eastern seaboard ports to West Africa. Sadly, despite our high-profile media exposure and a US Government Accountability Office report (GAO) corroborating our research and calling for export controls, the US government did not take action to prevent exports. Instead, they initiated two studies to quantify the problem. Unfortunately, the government refused to take stakeholder advice to use tracking devices and instead used opinion surveys and surrogate data. The resulting studies, therefore, lacked proper data and vastly under-reported the problem.

BAN decided it was necessary to do the job the government would not do and use GPS trackers to follow e-waste in the waste marketplace and track it in real time across the globe. We received a grant from the Body Shop foundation in 2014 that allowed us to place 205 trackers in old printers and, computer monitors and follow their path. The results finally quieted the waste trade deniers as the GPS trackers do their job very well; they served as little "lie detectors" or rather "truth serum."

With the trackers, we have been able to show that the Goodwill charity and Dell Computers allowed the export of trackers 21% of the time in their program known as ReConnect. Additionally, we were able to reveal that the electronics recyclers exported 40% of the time.

Through our unique work, we have demonstrated that tracker technology provides a "CAT scan" on an industry that has lived with a hidden malignancy far too long. Such data is essential to diagnose and remedy the disease. And we are proud to state that this real data on a very significant illegal toxic trade is already changing behavior.

# FROM DIAGNOSIS TO REMEDY

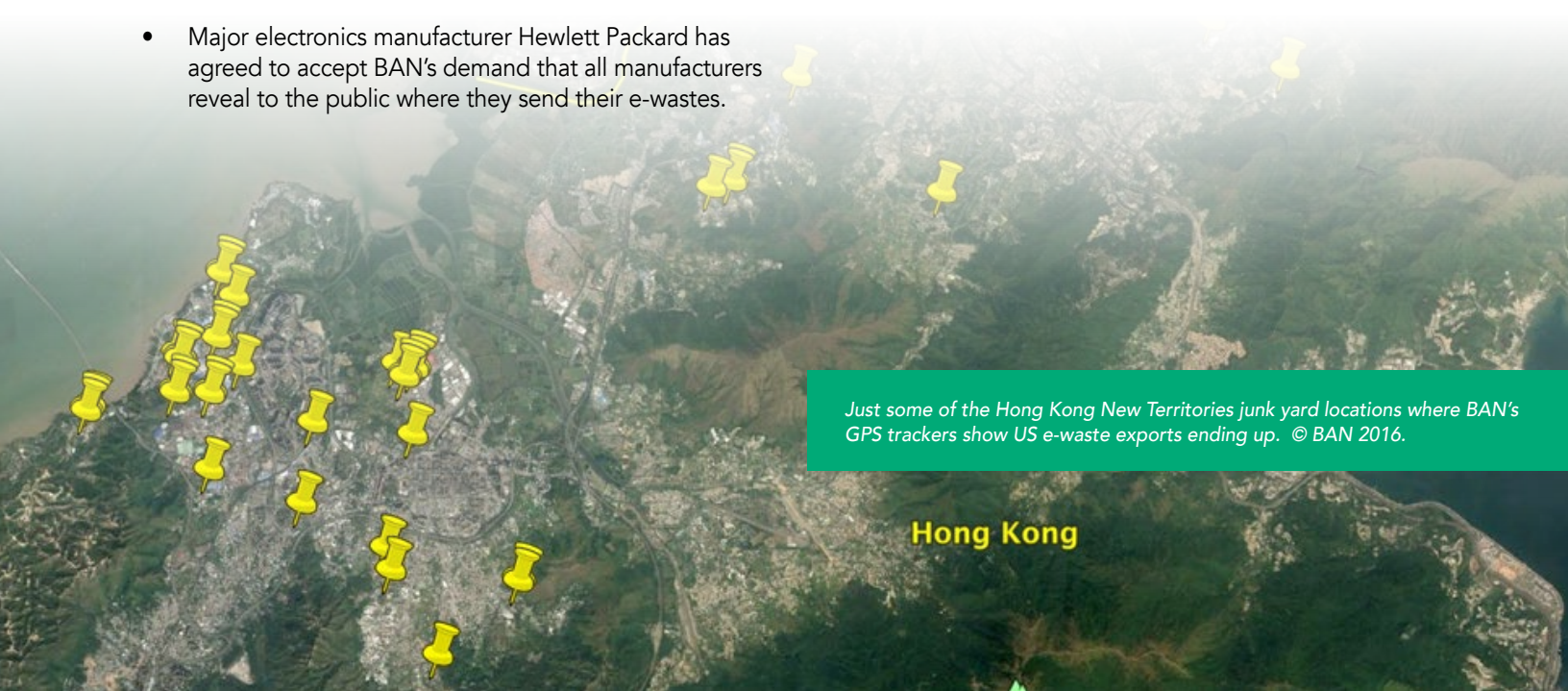
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Scrapped computer printers from the US piled high in one of hundreds of Hong Kong electronic junkyards. Here workers will break apart the equipment exposing themselves to harmful mercury or toners found in the e-waste. © BAN 2016

Already we can report that our efforts have spurred significant actions in response:

- The government of Taiwan took action against illegal importers after realizing thanks to our tracking, that their electronic producer responsibility law was being defrauded by e-waste importers.
- The government of Hong Kong promulgated new laws requiring all e-waste recyclers to have strict operational permits, while adding the importation of circuit boards to their existing e-waste import ban covering mercury or lead laden computer monitors.
- Major electronics manufacturer Hewlett Packard has agreed to accept BAN's demand that all manufacturers reveal to the public where they send their e-wastes.
- Prosecutors in the states of Washington and Oregon levied stiff fines against recycling firm Total Reclaim for being caught by BAN, exporting LCD monitors in violation of state hazardous waste laws.
- The BAN's e-Stewards Certification program uniquely decides to use GPS trackers as a routine part of their Performance Verification program -- allowing BAN to clandestinely run trackers through member facilities.
- Governments, the United Nations, and industry leaders have decided to fund and support BAN to conduct more research using GPS trackers.



Just some of the Hong Kong New Territories junk yard locations where BAN's GPS trackers show US e-waste exports ending up. © BAN 2016.

Hong Kong



TECH

# You'll Never Believe Where Your Old Computer Could End Up After You Hand It In for Recycling



KLINT FINLEY BUSINESS 05.09.16 06:01 PM

# LOCATION TRACKERS REVEAL WHERE YOUR E-JUNK REALLY ENDS UP



**The Intercept**

## GPS TRACKING DEVICES CATCH MAJOR U.S. RECYCLERS EXPORTING TOXIC E-WASTE

Elizabeth Grossman  
May 10 2016, 4:08 p.m.

f t e 21

South China Morning Post EDITION: HONG KONG

## HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT

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### Hong Kong becomes a dumping ground for US e-waste, research finds

A two year investigation by Basel Action Network attached 200 GPS trackers on broken electronic items in the US and found many ended up in dumping grounds in the New Territories.

## WHAT THEY ARE SAYING ABOUT BAN'S TRACKING

*"Now, thanks to a multi-year investigation by the US environmental watchdog Basel Action Network (BAN), the reality of e-waste dumping in Hong Kong can no longer be denied."*

Alex Lo, South China Morning Post

*"Tracking is really the first step in order to design a better system."*

Dr. Carlo Ratti, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)'s SenseAble Cities Lab

*"Sony recognizes BAN's work to shine a much needed spotlight on the fate of toxics from electronic waste. Sony's due diligence efforts are enhanced by these revelations."*

Doug Smith, Director Corporate Environmental, Sony Electronics Inc.

*"We are indeed very grateful for the collaborative efforts of BAN in assisting us in combating cross boundary movement of hazardous waste. We treasure our partnership."*

Mr. Gary Tam, Hong Kong Environmental Protection Department, UN

# BASEL CONVENTION ADVOCACY

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*As the only non-profit that regularly attends Basel Convention meetings, BAN's speeches are often instrumental in defending existing policies and advocating for just decisions.*

The 1989 United Nations' Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal is the landmark agreement for environmental justice from which the Basel Action Network takes its name. This international treaty now joined by 186 countries promotes national self-sufficiency in waste management, and restricts the export of hazardous wastes from developed countries to developing countries.

In 1995, delegates from developing countries working with activists including BAN's founder and director, boldly created the Basel Ban Amendment, which, when in force would completely prohibit the export from developed to developing countries for any reason. At the time of the release of this report, only four more countries are needed for entry into the force of international law. In 2015 and 2016, BAN travelled the globe to build consensus on trade

policies which would forbid the externalization of real costs and harm to communities in developing countries and to support universal ratification of the amendment. Additionally, BAN has worked within the Basel Convention to prevent weakening of existing agreements, including new loopholes which would allow exports of broken electronic devices to fall outside of the Convention with only promises that they will be repaired. Finally, we are proud of our work with governments such as those in Hong Kong and Taiwan to prevent illegal imports of toxic e-waste into their territory.

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*"We are so grateful to BAN for their tireless efforts to protect Nigeria and the entire continent of Africa from receiving massive shipments of non-working, obsolete electronic equipment. Future generations of Africans will avoid the sad fate of lead poisoning, cancer, and worse, thanks to BAN's ongoing campaigns."*



*Miranda Amachree, Acting Director, National Environmental Standards & Regulations Enforcement Agency in Nigeria*

# GREEN SHIP RECYCLING



Once-pristine beaches in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan are now toxic shipbreaking yards, where boys and men risk their lives to recycle 70% of the world's end-of-life ships.

BAN campaigns internationally and nationally for the proper and legal recycling of end-of-life ships. Ships impact all of our lives in ways we hardly realize. Ninety percent of the goods manufactured by virtually every major

corporation and consumed by us are transported via cargo ship. It is shocking to realize that these ubiquitous vehicles are not carefully recycled at end of life but are instead run up onto South Asian beaches and dismantled by hand by some of the poorest laborers on earth. In this process known as shipbreaking, desperate laborers are subjected to asbestosis, cancer from toxic chemicals, and death and maiming from all too common accidents of falling steel, explosions, or fires.

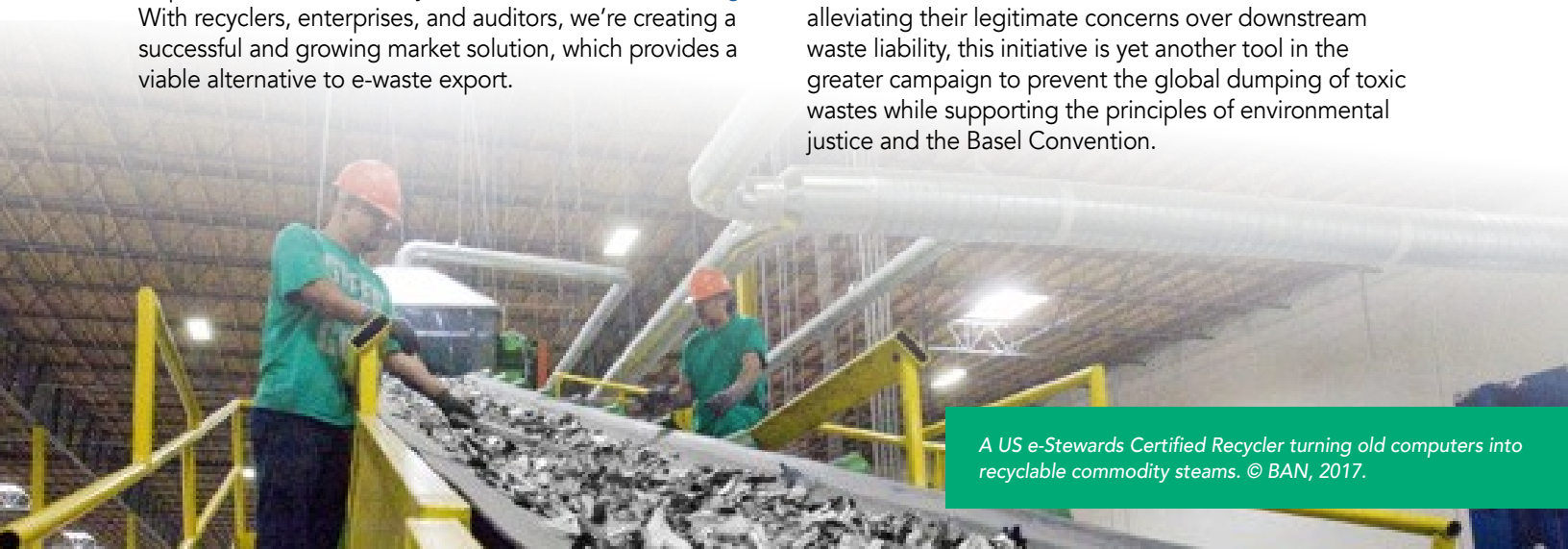
In 2015–2016, BAN, along with the coalition known as the NGO Platform on Shipbreaking, worked together to ensure that the European Union rejected the use of beaches to scrap ships in this primitive manner and, at the same time, created a new market-based campaign to ensure that the corporate world joins to reject this horrific method of ship management. This new program will be called ShipStewards and is based on BAN's very successful e-Stewards initiative on electronic waste.

# ELECTRONIC WASTE STEWARDSHIP



To help all of us tackle our toxic e-waste footprint, BAN's e-Stewards® Program certifies socially and environmentally responsible electronics recyclers (see [www.e-stewards.org](http://www.e-stewards.org)). With recyclers, enterprises, and auditors, we're creating a successful and growing market solution, which provides a viable alternative to e-waste export.

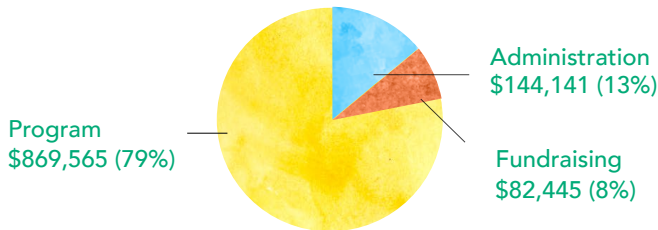
In 2015–2016, BAN worked to further improve the e-Stewards program by enhancing its enforcement methodology. The Performance Verification program was launched as a new aspect of our certification. It consisted in its first phase by initiating unannounced inspections in addition to the yearly site audits. Then, following the proof of concept of our GPS tracking program, BAN's e-Stewards program is now the only certification of electronics recycling in the world that will also routinely place GPS trackers in the incoming waste stream processed by its members. In addition to the clear benefits to customers, alleviating their legitimate concerns over downstream waste liability, this initiative is yet another tool in the greater campaign to prevent the global dumping of toxic wastes while supporting the principles of environmental justice and the Basel Convention.



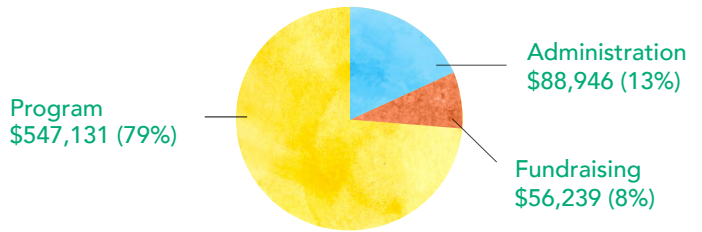
A US e-Stewards Certified Recycler turning old computers into recyclable commodity steams. © BAN, 2017.

# 2015-2016 FINANCIAL REPORT

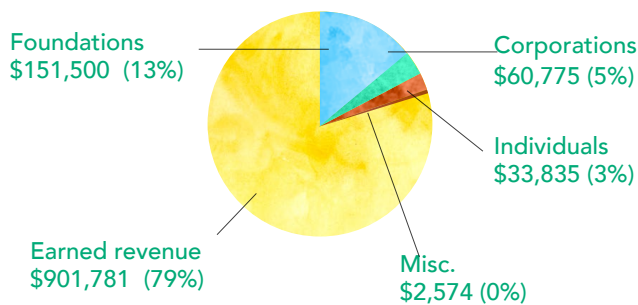
**2015 EXPENSES: \$1,096,151**



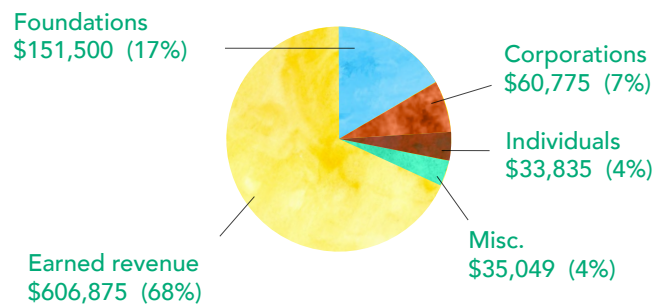
**2016 EXPENSES: \$692,316**



**2015 INCOME: \$1,150,465**



**2016 INCOME: \$750,943**



## STAFF

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 Hayley Palmer, Program and Operations Director  
 Sarah Westervelt, Policy Director  
 Mandy Knudtson, e-Stewards Business Director  
 Angelo Godbey, Information Technology Manager  
 Greg Swan, e-Stewards Certification Director  
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 Rachel Bloom, Marketing and Communications Manager  
 Lisa Sammons, e-Stewards Enterprise Manager  
 Mylinh Vo, Office Manager

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## BOARD

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 Shawn Drew  
 Jim Puckett



# THANK YOU ALL

We are deeply grateful for the support of all our donors.  
Together, we're turning back the toxic tide.

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Help us seize the days ahead.

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or email us at [donate@ban.org](mailto:donate@ban.org)



Basel Action Network (BAN) is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt, non-profit, charitable organization with a mission of turning back the toxic tide.

To learn more, visit us online at [ban.org](http://ban.org)

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