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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**HAZARDOUS CHEMICAL DISPOSAL: CATHODE RAY TUBE RECYCLING**

Old computers thrown into landfills break. Out of those broken machines come lead, phosphorus, cadmium, barium and mercury - chemicals that contaminate soil and water.

The National Safety Council estimates that by 2005, 350 million computers became obsolete, and that at least 55 million ended up in landfills. The hazardous chemicals are contained in the cathode ray tube (CRT) that provides a computer's visual display. CRTs are used in televisions, computer monitors, oscilloscopes and similar scientific equipment.

Recognizing the environmental and health hazards created by unsafe dumping of computers, Senator Will Espero (D-Ewa/Waipahu) introduced S.B. 927 to create a safe means of disposing of the environmentally hazardous, chemical-containing CRTs. The bill authorizes the state Department of Health, in cooperation with the counties, to establish a cathode ray tube special wastes recycling program by January 1, 2009.

S.B. 927 also makes it illegal to discard equipment that uses or contains a CRT after December 31, 2008.

The proposed recycling program is similar to the existing lead acid battery recycling program, where the seller is required to take the old product when a new product is purchased. Sellers of televisions, computer monitors, and similar equipment using or containing a CRT, would post signs that disposal is illegal, and accept old units brought in by the customer. A disposal fee would be included in the sale price of new equipment.

The environmental problem is nationwide. Massachusetts was the first state to prohibit disposing computer monitors in landfills. California's environmental agencies encourage consumers to donate or recycle. Florida found that CRTs are the second largest source of lead in its municipal solid waste stream, just behind lead acid batteries, and has undertaken an extensive strategy to combat the problem.

Senator Espero believes the scope and risk to our health compels the state to take action prohibiting disposal of CRTs and create this environmentally sound solution.

S.B. 927, "Relating to Recycling," passed out of the Committees on Energy and Environment, chaired by Senator Ron Menor, and Health, chaired by Senator David Ige. The bill now awaits hearing in the Ways & Means Committee, chaired by Senator Roslyn Baker.

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