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## Ohio EPA Joins State Electronics Challenge

Ohio EPA has become a partner organization in the State Electronics Challenge (SEC), a program developed by the Northeast Recycling Council Inc. (NERC) to encourage states to develop environmental goals and standards to meet when purchasing, operating, maintaining and disposing of electronics equipment.

The SEC is a voluntary program that encourages state, tribal, regional and local governments, including schools, colleges, universities, and other public entities to purchase green products, increase energy efficiency, reduce the impact of electronic products during use and manage obsolete electronics in an environmentally safe way.

Ohio EPA is the second government organization in Ohio to join the State Electronics Challenge, following MetroParks of Franklin County. "I challenge every eligible entity in Ohio to follow our lead. Together, we can make a difference," said Ohio EPA Director Scott J. Nally.

To complete the baseline, Ohio EPA is assessing activities already underway and using that information to open a dialog about how the Agency as a whole can more sustainably manage its information technology assets. Based on information gathered, Ohio EPA, in partnership with NERC, will review completed baseline information, determining which new goals Ohio EPA can focus on to be most effective.

Ohio EPA currently maintains more than 1,400 computers, so the Agency has the potential to significantly reduce energy usage, emissions and waste, improving Ohio's environment. Ohio EPA will provide periodic updates on its website as it moves forward.

Ohio EPA will lead by example in becoming an SEC partner, demonstrating electronics stewardship. At the end of each year, partners can apply for recognition for their efforts and report results. Ohio EPA's goal in joining SEC is to ensure the Agency is purchasing environmentally friendly IT equipment and increase the reuse and recycling of computers while lowering operating costs.

Used and obsolete electronics are part of an increasingly complex waste stream posing environmental management and disposal challenges. Expired products such as computers, cell phones, digital cameras, printers, copiers, etc., can contain a variety of hazardous materials and chemicals in components like cathode ray tubes, circuit boards, batteries and specific electronic components that include lead and cadmium. Partners in the program examine how to manage these products more effectively, keeping environmental impact in mind.

SEC calculates that for every 1,000 "green" computers purchased and old units recycled, energy savings include:

- decreasing energy use by an electricity equivalent to what is needed to power 101 households annually;
- lowering greenhouse gas emissions to the equivalent of removing 71 passenger cars from the road per year;
- avoiding 34.7 metric tons of municipal solid waste or the amount generated by 18 households annually;
- decreasing hazardous waste from the waste stream by 17 metric tons; and
- avoiding usage of 340 pounds of toxic materials, including bioaccumulative toxins like lead and mercury.

The SEC is made possible by a grant from U.S. EPA and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and is sponsored by several electronics companies. For more information on the SEC, visit its website at <http://stateelectronicschallenge.net>.