

VETO MESSAGE ON ESSB 6428

March 24, 2006

To the Honorable President and Members,
The Senate of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to sections Section 26, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6428 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to providing electronic product recycling through manufacturer financed opportunities."

This bill creates a recycling program for "electronic wastes," which includes used and unwanted computers and televisions. Section 26 of the bill would prohibit the export of these wastes to certain other countries.

I regret that, based on legal advice, the State of Washington does not have the necessary authority to prohibit the export of electronic waste. Accordingly, I will not put the entire bill at risk because of this section alone.

However, I believe that the section represents good environmental policy. I will therefore call on the President and Congress to take up this issue and enact legislation that prohibits the export of our hazardous wastes to third world countries that are not prepared to manage them.

Once enacted by the federal government, I recognize this might affect our options for proper recycling and disposal of e-wastes. To make sure we are ready, I hereby direct the Department of Ecology to evaluate alternatives to the export of these wastes and recommend actions as needed to ensure capacity for their proper management.

For the remainder of the bill, this is a new program for the state and it will take some time and experience to make sure it runs right. I am asking Ecology to work closely with all affected stakeholders to ensure that this bill is implemented in a fair and equitable manner.

Along that line, I am directing Ecology to take the following steps:

1. To adopt, within their new program rules, rigorous financial assurance requirements for new manufacturers, sufficient to ensure that they will be responsible for recycling their products and not leave them for others to clean up;

2. To evaluate alternatives for managing legacy e-waste products in a manner that does not create competitive differences between existing and new companies, including a way to distribute costs of recycling past products more fairly among all affected parties; and,

3. To evaluate the use of product toxicity in lieu of, or in addition to, product weight, when determining equitable cost shares.

In addition, I am asking Ecology to provide annual reports on the progress, problems, and stakeholder concerns with implementation of this bill. The reports should include any needed changes to the statute to ensure fairness and clarity in the program.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Section 26 of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6428.

With the exception of Section 26, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6428 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Gregoire
Governor