

Ali Chohan
14 Strawberry Lane
Upper Saddle River, NJ 07458

Dear Mr. Chohan:

Thank you for your letter of November 12, 2002, to Administrator Whitman. In your letter, you expressed concern about water pollution from companies and individuals, including pollution from disposal of used electronic appliances.

I appreciate your concerns about the harm that can be created by improper disposal of materials, including possible damage to our waterways. EPA and its State partners have developed a detailed set of regulations to ensure appropriate management of wastes and prevent water pollution and other forms of pollution. Information about these programs can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/osw/> and <http://www.epa.gov/eftpages/water.html>.

Yet, serious challenges remain. In particular, your emphasis on the fate of used electronics highlights a growing area of attention. For example, over 250 million computers are expected to be retired in the next five years. Only a small number of these computers are currently recycled.

EPA, many U.S. states, industry, and non-profit groups are working to solve the challenge presented by used electronics. Let me note a few of the current EPA initiatives. Recently EPA proposed changes to the hazardous waste regulations to encourage greater reuse, recycling, and better management of cathode ray tubes. We believe that the proposed rule is an important first step in dealing with the growing waste stream of end-of-life electronics. EPA actively supports the National Electronics Product Stewardship Initiative, which is a national stakeholder dialogue between electronics manufacturers, state and local governments, recyclers, non-profit organizations, and EPA. We are hopeful that the dialogue will result in an agreement on how electronics will be recycled in the United States. EPA will also soon announce a national electronics recycling outreach campaign that we hope will provide consumers with the information and the venues they need to recycle their used electronics safely. For more information on the topic of used electronics, see <http://www.epa.gov/epr/products/electronics.html>.

We believe that efforts like these, with involvement from concerned citizens such as yourself, will help address the environmental needs you outlined.

Sincerely,

Robert Springer, Director
Office of Solid Waste

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