

# That's a whole lot of waste not going to landfills!

It's almost that time in Colorado. Beginning July 1, 2013, the state will join more than two dozen others in banning residents from throwing away most electronic devices.

This is a huge change for Colorado residents, who will have to think about recycling instead of relying on their garbage collectors to pick up old electronic devices and take them to the landfill with the rest of the week's waste.

Seems our electronic devices contain hazardous materials – such as lead, lithium, mercury, arsenic, cadmium, chromium and silver – which are not a concern when the equipment is in use. But when these devices are tossed aside, they have the potential of contaminating groundwater and soil.

Let's get down to the basics. What types of devices are we talking about?

According to the state's website, we're talking about almost every electronic device except for telephones. That includes TV sets, central processing units (CPUs), computer monitors, peripherals, printers, fax machines, laptops, notebooks, ultra books, net books, electronic tablets, digital video disc (DVD) players, video cassette recorders (VCRs), radios, stereos, video game consoles and video display devices with viewing screens greater than 4 inches diagonally.

That's a whole lot of waste. In fact, when the "Electronic Recycling Jobs Act" was being debated, legislators were told that Colorado businesses and households throw away 40,000 to 161,000 tons of electronic waste each year, while recycling only 8,000 tons.

But what is a consumer to do with all those devices? Here are some suggestions:

- 1) You might be able to donate or re-sell working devices.
- 2) If that's not possible, think about recycling.

Communities have and will continue to hold collection events. Manufacturers sometimes have programs where they will allow consumers to return old items. And then there are reputable recycling firms that can be called in.

Yes, it will be an added headache as residents get used to recycling instead of tossing items in the garbage. But I think that's a headache that's good for our future.

To find a list of recycling options, visit the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment's website at <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDPHE-HM/CB0N/1251615964355> or <http://www.grenergadgets.org/>.