

SOURCE: Brown Daily Herald (Providence, RI)
AUDIENCE: 11,382 [provided by Nielsen//NetRatings]
DATE: 04-23-2009
HEADLINE: Rep. calls for 'product stewardship'

Source Website

Anne Speyer

Staff Writer

Published: Thursday, April 23, 2009 Updated: Thursday, April 23, 2009 State Representative Donna Walsh, D-Dist. 36, has introduced a bill in the General Assembly that calls for manufacturers to regulate the disposal of waste from certain consumer products.

The approach, called "product stewardship," requires makers, designers and sellers to share the responsibility and costs of waste disposal.

"Americans are inundated with products with hazardous components and wasteful packaging," Walsh said in a press release. "We need the people who create and sell items to be more mindful of the harmful effects their products have on the environment."

Toward that end, the bill would institute product stewardship methods of waste disposal.

"It doesn't make much sense that cities and towns -- and ultimately, taxpayers -- are the ones who end up paying for the disposal of hazardous items used in products," Walsh said in the press release. "Some of that responsibility should fall to manufacturers who choose to make products that way. If we start implanting product stewardship, we will see manufacturers making design changes that reduce waste and unnecessarily harmful effects on our environment."

Some businesses currently voluntarily engage in product stewardship. Some office supply stores, for example, collect used ink cartridges to ensure that they are recycled properly.

Walsh's bill would require the state Department of Environmental Management to develop recommendations consistent with the product stewardship programs already in place in states such as California, Vermont and Minnesota.

The ***Minnesota Pollution Control Agency***, which first instituted a product stewardship policy in 1999, offers initiatives for the disposal of beverage containers, telephone directories, paint, compact fluorescent lightbulbs, carpets, automobiles and electronics.

According to the press release, Rhode Island already has an "e-waste" law that requires proper disposal of hazardous electronic products. Walsh's bill would institute requirements similar to those in the e-waste program.

The House Environment and Natural Resources Committee recommended on March 19 that the bill be held for further study.

Copyright 2009 by

The Brown Daily Herald, Inc. All rights reserved.

Highlights: Minnesota Pollution, Control Agency