

STRIDES TO STOP THE E-WASTE TIDE

Progress on e-recycling, a breakthrough with electronics industry giant HP, TCE takes on Congress in 2010

From convincing international electronics companies to take back their TVs to a hard-won breakthrough with industry giant Hewlett-Packard, TCE continues to spearhead statewide and national campaigns to stem the ever-growing tide of toxic electronic waste making its way to dumps at home and abroad. Since our last report, we've accomplished a great deal on the e-waste front thanks to your steadfast grassroots support.

TCE SPURS RECYCLING AS AMERICA GOES DIGITAL

Ensuring manufacturers take responsibility for the full life-cycle of their products is a major step on the path toward greening our electronics and preventing pollution from toxic e-waste. Mounting a national public pressure campaign, TCE and our coalition allies achieved a milestone victory early in 2009 when Panasonic, Toshiba and Sharp agreed to implement voluntary, nationwide TV recycling programs prior to the transition to digital broadcast signals in June. Best Buy and Mitsubishi began national recycling efforts shortly thereafter. But it wasn't all victories and celebration. During the 2009 Texas Legislative Session, TCE supporters wrote more than 27,000 personal letters to state lawmakers in favor of producer takeback recycling legislation for old televisions. The bill passed overwhelmingly in the Texas House and unanimously in the Senate, but Governor Perry issued a puzzling veto just forty-eight hours before the bill would have become law. TCE is currently working to secure commitments from Texas gubernatorial candidates to address the issue and, rest assured, we plan to work overtime during the 2011 Session to pass effective legislation that includes TVs and other electronics.

TOXIC E-WASTE EXPORT: WHAT GOES AROUND...

This year, we're taking on one of the more sinister problems associated with e-waste: exporting obsolete or broken electronics—and the abundance of toxins inside—to developing nations for hazardous dismantling or, worse, outright dumping. By now, many have witnessed

TAKE ACTION TO STOP E-WASTE EXPORT

CONGRESS CAN STOP THE TOXIC E-WASTE TRADE. TELL YOUR U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO SUPPORT LEGISLATION PREVENTING E-WASTE EXPORT DUMPING.

TAKE ACTION TODAY:
www.texasenvironment.org

the shocking images of crude overseas e-scrap operations in national media outlets such as *60 Minutes*, *Frontline*, *TIME Magazine* and *National Geographic*, among others. There's no denying the threats posed by e-waste export to the global environment and human health. But that's only the most publicized part of the export problem. Sham recyclers—really waste brokers engaged in toxic black market trade—also hurt our economy by undercutting legitimate, free market recycling businesses here at home



Texas e-recyclers create green jobs and preserve natural resources...

...unscrupulous exporters harm workers and the global environment.



Texas businesses like CompuCycle and TechnoCycle (top photo) put people to work in the green economy. Meanwhile, over half of American e-waste sent to so-called "recyclers" is illegally or unethically shipped to e-scrap operations in developing nations.

and exporting good Texas jobs along the way. Peeling back another layer, exporting obsolete electronics often leads to data security problems when sensitive information is stolen from computers shipped abroad. The U.S. military has also documented a rise in counterfeit computer chips in its equipment—chips traced back to e-waste exports. Completing a dangerous global waste circuit, the toxic metals lead and cadmium, found in e-waste exported to the developing world, end up in children's jewelry imported to American shopping malls and big box stores, exposing our kids to possible harm.

LOOKING FORWARD

Our number one policy priority in 2010 is passing federal legislation to stop e-waste export dumping in developing countries. We've already laid a cornerstone for future success by working with the U.S. EPA to enforce existing law against exporting old-style televisions and monitors; however, new federal legislation needs to cover all toxic e-waste. With your continued grassroots support, TCE and our allies will move a bill through Congress this spring that does exactly that. And we're well-positioned to make it happen: thanks largely to the thousands upon thousands of TCE supporters who wrote letters to HP, the nation's largest computer-maker now supports legislation to stop these toxic exports. This, our most recent victory, is a likely game-changer. Stay tuned. ☀

What's Inside:

Letter from Robin, TCE Director
Meet the TCE Staff
2009 Highlights & Victories

Reforming the TCEQ
Annual Meeting Invite
Recycling Mini Guide

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Robin Schneider

You are amazing. In spite of the economic uncertainty of the last eighteen months, you have come through for the health and environment of Texas. Your generosity towards TCE kept us on track. Thank you.

2009 was the first full year we had offices in Central Texas, the Metroplex and Greater Houston. All are going strong. Together, they reached hundreds of thousands of households, having conversations with newcomers and old-timers. Texans obliged with over 62,000 letters to state lawmakers in Austin, the CEOs of major electronics firms, the Obama Administration and the U.S. EPA.

Your letters work. With the only exception being Governor Perry's veto of the TV recycling bill, every time you expressed your grassroots support, decision-makers listened. Of course, with strong public pressure in the coming year, we expect even the Governor will get the picture when we take on TV recycling next legislative session.

Speaking of electronics, last year marked the first full year of producer takeback recycling for computers and monitors in Texas. In January 2010, computer and monitor manufacturers reported collecting 12.4 million tons of e-waste for recycling in 2009. This means millions of pounds of lead and mercury did not go into Texas landfills. However, it only amounts to half a pound per Texan. Other states are doing up to five times better. We can close the gap by strengthening the Computer TakeBack law. But, hey, it's a start—and it happened because Texans like you stood with us since we started pushing for takeback recycling policies in 2002.

TCE plans to work hard in 2010 to pass federal legislation to stop the export of toxic e-waste to developing countries. This is a key step in creating a vibrant electronics recycling sector and the jobs that would come with it. Good Texas e-waste recyclers are being undercut by exporters and having a difficult time competing with and surviving the unfair competition. Recycling generally creates at least seven times more jobs than landfilling does, so it's time to put folks to work by leveling the playing field and increasing the volume of electronics recycling here in America.

As we put a tough economic year behind us, I can't thank you enough for the overwhelming support from you, our members. Our new Houston office survived Hurricane Ike and had an incredible first full year of operation. Because thousands of Texans pitch in, we can weather the storms and continue to take up the varied challenges of protecting the environment in Texas. In fact, thanks to amazing folks like you, TCE raised more and reached more people in 2009 than any previous year.

In 2010, we will be doing even more to help Texans hold our public officials and companies accountable through our online organizing. So, if you are not already on our e-mail list, please visit our website (www.texasenvironment.org) and sign up for updates and action alerts. We're getting with the social networking program, too: now you can even join us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. We hope our increased web presence will keep you more informed and as active as you wish to be in between our visits to your door or our calls on the phone! ☕

CONTACT INFORMATION

TCE AUSTIN

611 South Congress
Suite 200-B
Austin, TX 78704
512.326.5655

TCE DALLAS

3303 Lee Parkway
Suite 402
Dallas, TX 75219
214.599.7840

TCE HOUSTON

3100 Richmond
Suite 290
Houston, TX 77098
713.337.4192

MEET THE TCE STAFF



TCE Austin



TCE Dallas



TCE Houston

You know that TCE doesn't depend on high-paid lobbyists with slicked hair and expensive suits to influence Texas policymakers. Instead, we rely on the voice of the people to resonate in the halls of the Capitol, in board rooms and down at City Hall. That's why we're the only environmental organization in Texas with permanent door-to-door grassroots organizing staff in each of the state's largest metropolitan areas. We believe that one person at a time... then another...and another...can together build a cleaner, more sustainable future.



2009 HIGHLIGHTS

LEGISLATIVE RECAP

TCE was busy at the Capitol in 2009 and laid a solid foundation for future legislation. In addition to the TV recycling bill, TCE worked with state legislators from both sides of the aisle to build on the 2007 Computer TakeBack Law. Legislation prohibiting the disposal of computers, House Bill 4084, received a hearing but ultimately died in committee. H.B. 284 called for reporting overseas e-waste shipments to developing countries and H.B. 2826 required electronics retailers to let customers know about producer takeback options. Both bills passed the House, but stalled in the Senate. TCE also worked to boost producer takeback recycling for old thermostats containing mercury switches; however, H.B. 4056 did not make it over the finish line. The first-ever bill in Texas requiring producer takeback for fluorescent lighting (H.B. 3422) was introduced and received an initial hearing. Although these bills did not become law, they blazed a new trail for progress in Texas.

A NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN

In concert with dozens of environmental advocates from our five-state region, TCE successfully pushed the Obama Administration to reject the candidacy of a long-time lobbyist for industry polluters and instead appoint a true environmental leader to the EPA Administrator post for Region VI. Dr. Al Armendariz, an engineering professor from SMU, has hit the ground running with effective, science-based environmental enforcement policy.

FREE AND OPEN BEACHES

In November, Texas voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 9, officially adding our state's Open Beaches Act to the Texas Constitution. TCE's grassroots outreach boosted voter turnout for the statewide election, and the amendment passed with the second-highest margin of the ballot measures. Texans can now be proud to have one of the strongest beach protection policies in the country!

REFORMING THE STATE ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY

The next fifteen months present TCE supporters with a once-in-a-decade opportunity to change the way our state environmental agency carries out—or fails to carry out—its mission to protect our health and natural resources. This year, the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission will conduct a comprehensive review of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), analyzing the agency and relaying recommendations to state lawmakers. In turn, lawmakers must pass an aptly named “Sunset Bill” during the 2011 Legislative Session or the agency will be abolished. Because this is must-pass legislation, it provides multiple openings for meaningful and much-needed reform. As the only grassroots organization in Texas working full-time on waste and recycling issues, we have big plans for the Sunset Review...and we need your help. The five Senators and five House members on the Sunset Commission will consider public comments prior to making their legislative recommendations. A strong outpouring from citizens throughout the state will help us improve recycling, reduce waste and protect Texas communities from mountains of garbage. Our top priorities for the Sunset Review:

Reinvigorate Texas Recycling Efforts: In 1991, Texas lawmakers passed a bill that set a voluntary goal to reduce trash bound for landfills by 40% in three years. If the goal wasn't met, TCEQ was directed to evaluate a ban on dumping yard waste in Texas landfills. Well, we missed the goal, but the agency failed to follow the statute by examining options for yard waste diversion. To this day, TCEQ continues to ignore the law even as scores of corporate and government entities implement Zero Waste plans to divert as much waste as possible.

Protect Texans from Super-Sized Landfills: Instead of requiring new landfills to meet federal standards passed two decades ago, TCEQ currently allows trash facilities to expand atop old landfills, frequently over sites with no protective liners, creating literal mountains of garbage that often become the highest point for miles around. This “grandfather loophole” leaves ground and surface water vulnerable for generations due to antiquated pollution control technologies. To boot, TCEQ places no term limits on these super-sized facilities, so many will continue to accept trash for the next thirty, sixty, or even hundred years.

Improve E-Waste Recycling Outreach: The 2007 Computer TakeBack Law contained a mandate for TCEQ to lead statewide public education campaigns to promote the new e-waste recycling program. Although the agency facilitates a website with links to manufacturer recycling programs (www.TexasRecyclesComputers.org), a recent TCE survey of two hundred Texas cities showed that four out of every five—representing over 10 million people—do not refer to free takeback programs or to the TakeBack Law. Texas deserves better. ☀️



CLOSER TO ZERO IN CENTRAL TEXAS

After the City of Austin passed the state's first Zero Waste Strategic Plan, TCE and others formed the Central Texas Zero Waste Alliance. Comprised of conservation advocates and businesspeople, the Alliance has witnessed several victories in its inaugural year: forming the first local CTZWA chapter in Austin, generating front-page newspaper headlines and TV coverage on the poor contract the City signed with Greenstar Recycling, and securing a new City of Austin Solid Waste Director (Bob Gedert, a Zero Waste expert), who assumed the position in February.

LOOKOUT TRASH TRANSFER STATION

After years of being stymied, neighbors in the City of Richardson asked TCE to help fight a proposal to dramatically expand a local trash transfer facility. The plan called for a massive increase in garbage intake, ultimately creating a mega-dumping station that would have been one of the closest of its type to a residential community in Texas. Working with neighborhood leaders, TCE helped scuttle the original expansion plan and is now providing support for negotiations that will drastically reduce the proposed capacity, strengthen environmental protections and eventually overhaul the City's current waste policies. 🌱

SUSTAINABLE GRASSROOTS SUPPORT

Sustainability is more than just a hip, green buzzword—it's a way of thinking, a process rather than a product. When you make a contribution to TCE, you not only help sustain the organization and the work we do, you also make a statement that you stand for a sustainable environment and economy, a society in which long-term impacts are greater than the sum of short-term profits. And it's more than just an idea. Right now, businesses, local governments and individuals are taking unprecedented steps to reduce waste, conserve resources and curb pollution as a result of TCE's grassroots campaigns. Of course, our success doesn't come from buying Super Bowl ads or pinning our hopes to the tails of donkeys or elephants every election cycle. Our success comes from you. So, this year, we're asking all of our supporters to make a statement on behalf of sustainability with a monthly or quarterly contribution to TCE. In doing so, you sustain us... so we can keep working to make Texas more sustainable. 🌱

TCE is dedicated to stretching your dollars to ensure that more goes directly into our award-winning grassroots campaigns to create sustainable environmental and economic policies. Our financial statement is below.

Where the money came from in 2009:

Income Total \$1,409,921

- 95% Grassroots Contributions from over 58,000 Texans
- 3% Restricted Projects Funding
- 2% Reimbursed Expenses, Misc.



How the money was spent in 2009:

Expense Total \$1,424,946

- 73% Environmental Advocacy, Organizing & Education for over 600,000 Texans
- 19% Fundraising to Sustain Organization
- 8% Managing Organization



SOURCE: TCE IRS Form 990, 2009



**TEXAS CAMPAIGN
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

611 South Congress Avenue, Suite 200-B
Austin, TX 78704

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE PAID
AUSTIN, TX
PERMIT NO. 2703

TCE ANNUAL MEETING INVITATION + RECYCLING MINI GUIDE

join us for our TCE

Annual Meeting + Celebration!

1st time back in Houston

Saturday, March 27th
5:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Lamar Tower
Conference Room
2929 Buffalo Speedway
Houston, TX 77098

hosted by:

Cissy Farenthold
1st Texas Woman in Congress

RSVP
(713) 337-4192

We don't have a stockpile of TCE paraphernalia—after all, we do our best to put your money to work for the environment in Texas—but we can offer you our new mini guide for common, yet hard-to-recycle household items...



**TEXAS CAMPAIGN
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

How do I recycle my old...

**recycling
mini
guide**

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| computers, monitors & laptops | ★ TexasRecyclesComputers.org |
| televisions & other electronics | ★ TexasTakeBack.org |
| compact fluorescent light bulbs | ★ all Home Depot locations |
| cell phone/laptop batteries | ★ call2recycle.org |
| mercury-added thermostats | ★ thermostat-recycle.org |
| plastic bags | ★ plasticbagrecycling.org |
| large appliances & "white goods" | ★ recycle-steel.org |
| Brita® water filters | ★ preserveproducts.com/recycling |
| Styrofoam® | ★ avoid as much as possible! |

Use this quick guide to find recycling options for common household items

for more info or to sign up for recycling tips, go to:
www.texasenvironment.org

(cut along dotted line and tape to the refrigerator or place in your wallet)