



**TEXAS CAMPAIGN  
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

STEVE - DON'T BE A MINI PLAYER - RECYCLE ALL E-WASTE

ComputerTakeBack's Banner Flying During Steve Jobs Commencement Speech at Stanford University, June 12.



Illegal dumpsite in Lagos, Nigeria containing electronic waste from the U.S. These dumps are routinely burned to create more space for waste. Photo: Basel Action Network

## E-WASTE CAMPAIGN UPDATES

# Electronic Waste Campaign Gets Results

TCE became involved with the Computer TakeBack Campaign shortly after an international exposé revealed that 50 to 80% of the U.S. electronic waste (or e-waste) taken to U.S. "recyclers" was illegally shipped to developing countries, largely to unsafe dirty scrap operations. The "Exporting Harm" investigation documented extreme water, air and land pollution in China.

With this revelation, e-waste went being unwanted clutter to an obvious danger to people's lives and the planet.

TCE later exposed an illegal Central Texas dump that included electronics once owned by a state environmental agency and an Austin area school district. Large quantities of e-waste were illegally dumped in a Central Texas landfill – and the state has yet to enforce the hazardous waste dumping laws in this case.

In October 2005, TCE learned that electronics were being sent to Africa under the guise of bridging the digital divide. Unfortunately, most of the shipments are unusable junk. Much ends up in illegal dumps often in the midst of urban neighborhoods. These dumps are routinely set on fire to decrease the volume, creating dangerous air and water pollution.

Investigators documented that some of the e-waste in Nigeria once belonged to the cities of Houston and San Antonio. TCE contacted local reporters and the resulting coverage, especially in San Antonio, got results. Within days, a San Antonio official said the city will set up

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## TEXAS LANDFILLS CAMPAIGN UPDATES

### Outpouring of Concern Helps Strengthen Texas Policies on Trash Issues

There was a stunned silence in the room when the state environmental agency staff told members of a statewide trash advisory panel that thousands of letters had been received calling for stronger trash standards. The large number of letters reflects the deep concerns many Texans have for their water and air quality.

People are shocked that Texas has allowed landfills to be built within 50 feet of a home, business, school or place of worship. Most states, including Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana have stronger standards than Texas on buffer zones. In many areas, Texas laws fall short of protecting our water, air, land and local communities.



See TCE's website [www.texasenvironment.org](http://www.texasenvironment.org) for our report "Texas Trash Rules Matter: Why Stronger Rules are Needed for Super-Sized Landfills to Stop the Trashing of Texas."

### Landfill Neighbors Join Together

TCE has been organizing Texans to call for better standards for landfills, working closely with landfill neighbor groups. TCE held a training and strategy session with landfill neighbors in July 2005. Local leaders came from communities as diverse as Abilene, Sherman, Brownsville area, Palo Pinto County and Williamson County. The gathering provided local activists with ideas on how to address problem landfills in their communities and long-term strategies on reducing the need for landfills. The participants endorsed a platform dubbed "Seven Essential Safeguards for Super-sized Landfills" to draw attention to major changes needed in the standards for trash facilities.

### Mixed Progress on Texas Trash Standards

In March 2006, the three environmental agency commissioners approved a new set of trash rules that falls short of what TCE and others hoped for. Some of advances include:

- Slightly stronger requirements for detecting water pollution at trash facilities
- Requiring that large signs be posted around proposed or expanding trash facilities to notify the public of the plans
- Requiring trash companies to put their permit applications on their website so that the public can review them on the Internet without increasing the workload of state environmental agency staff.

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## 15 years of community organizing, with lots to show for it!

This year marks the 15th anniversary of Texas Campaign for the Environment's beginnings! TCE organizers began knocking on doors in Houston and the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex in May 1991. In 2006, TCE is still organizing – and with lots to show for it!



Robin Schneider

It has been my privilege to work for TCE since 1997 and serve as its director since 2000. I love working with the dedicated organizers who are doing the main work of our outreach. I'm humbled by the volunteers who serve on TCE's Board of Directors and others who donate their time and talent to make this organization effective and responsive.

In 1991, TCE was hard at work to improve recycling programs. TCE also has made gains on air pollution and other issues.

Fifteen years later, our long-range goal is

to take recycling to the next level – with producer takeback recycling.

TCE believes that in the long run, local governments and others should not have to figure out how to recycle or dispose of products that were never designed for recycling – especially those products made with toxins. Our water supply and air should not be contaminated with the toxins from products that shouldn't be discarded in landfills or burned in incinerators. Nor should it be illegally dumped in developing countries, harming people and the environment.

The idea is to replace “cradle to grave” thinking, which assumes that products will be landfilled at the end of the useful lives, with “cradle to cradle” design, in which the products will be recycled.

Those design changes will happen when a producer has responsibility for the cost of the end of life of their product. When those costs are built into the price of a product, we will have the market rewarding

environmentally friendly design. This will remove the costs that are now unfairly put on local governments and garbage rate-payers. This will also decrease the need for mining of virgin materials at the front end as well as reduce the risks of toxic contamination at the back end.

A major initiative in 2005, aside from all the work we did on electronic waste and trash issues, was re-launching our website to make it easier for Texans to get information and stay involved. If you haven't already done so, please visit our website – [www.texasenvironment.org](http://www.texasenvironment.org).

Here are some highlights:

- Read the latest press clip of interest.
- Check in on our Announcements section of the Home Page for the most time-sensitive bulletins.
- Watch an excellent video on the “Recycling for This Century” page that sets forth the case for producer takeback recycling and zero waste policies.
- Finally, if you're not receiving our emails, click on eList Sign Up – and set your own preferences. This is the most cost-effective way for TCE to get the word out and for you to stay plugged in.

Over these 15 years, organizers with TCE have conversed with hundreds of thousands of Texans about participating in efforts to protect our health and the well being of future generations and the planet. Thank you for being among the Texans who have stepped forward to support this work. Your help has made it possible for TCE to win so many campaigns over the years. Thank you for fueling our grassroots letter writing drives, which are the foundation of our successes. Government officials and companies have a hard time ignoring thousands of personal letters or phone calls from people like you.

I can't tell you where TCE will be 15 years from now. As long as we can rely on your support and the assistance of thousands of Texans, I'm confident it will continue to grow and change and meet the challenges ahead.

### 2005 IN REVIEW

## TCE Racks Up Multiple Victories on Trash Issues in 2005

### Public Representation Preserved

On December 14, 2005, TCE exposed that James McQuaid, a new appointee to one of two “general public” slots on a key state trash advisory panel was married to a Trinity Waste executive. (Trinity and BFI are part of Allied Waste.) McQuaid failed to disclose this conflict of interest when he applied for the position. TCE called on him to resign or for state environmental agency to remove him. On Dec. 20, 2005, McQuaid resigned. (Jan Artley, nominated by the League of Women Voters was then picked for the spot.)

### Expansion Plans at Two Austin Airport Area Landfills Stopped, City Starts Planning for Improved Recycling

On May 19, 2005, TCE helped defeat a proposal by City of Austin staff to combine its old problem landfill with another problem landfill run by IESI, a private company. TCE pointed out that the city staff was proposing to enter into a contract lasting at least 65 years with a company that has been in business for fewer than a dozen years. TCE helped expose the problem of birds hovering around IESI's landfill, which are a threat to planes landing at the nearby airport.

Furthermore, TCE pointed out that the city does not have a current long-range trash plan.

The City of Austin appointed a task force to develop a comprehensive solid waste plan, and TCE's executive director was appointed to serve on it. The Task Force and Mayor Will Wynn have joined many other cities in adopting a Zero Waste goal. Now the task is to put in place and implement a plan to reach that goal.

### Pressure on North Texas Landfill Yields Limits on Expansion

TCE organized to oppose an expansion at the IESI landfill in the Weatherford area (west of Fort Worth). In January 2005, TCE's efforts culminated in an eleventh hour agreement to limit future enlargements. The

a take back provision for their obsolete computer equipment in future purchasing contracts. The city ended its practice of auctioning off the systems for possible export or other unsafe disposal methods.

When electronics producers take back e-waste, they must comply with hazardous waste laws. E-waste can't be put in landfills or shipped overseas. Recycling jobs are created domestically and the environment and public health are protected.

### TCE Campaigns to Improve Apple's Lagging E-waste Policies

TCE has worked to show Apple, as we proved to Dell, that there is consumer demand for responsible, convenient computer recycling programs. In January 2005, TCE staff and volunteers helped launch the national Apple Campaign at Apple's Cupertino headquarters and at the Macworld Expo in San Francisco, California.

TCE helped organize pressure actions across the country in late March. In June, Apple began a takeback program for their iPods at Apple retail stores. This is a first step. But TCE is working to see that Apple offers convenient takeback for computers and other electronics for all its U.S. customers.

Apple certainly has the ability to respond to consumer demand across the U.S. They abide by the takeback policies in Maine, the European Union, South Korea, Taiwan and Japan. Unfortunately, Apple continues to lobby against producer takeback recycling policies in the U.S.

Your involvement in the form of letters and memberships has been crucial in making this progress possible. Consumer action has been of major importance in starting takeback programs across the nation and world. Dropping off your Apple e-waste at Apple stores is another form of action consumers can take to show demand for improved policies.

For more information on the national Apple Campaign and to send an email to CEO Steve Jobs, go to [www.BadApple.biz](http://www.BadApple.biz). Your voice will help ensure Apple Computers takes responsibility for toxic e-waste created by their obsolete electronic products.

## 2005 IN REVIEW

three Commissioners who oversee the state environmental agency agreed to hear an appeal by TCE and landfill neighbors of an expansion granted by staff that did not require the normal permitting and public notice provisions.

Just hours before the hearing at the environmental agency in Austin, TCE and the surrounding neighbors struck a deal with IESI to limit the overall expansions planned. All three Commissioners went on record to say that the process used in this expansion did not set a precedent for other landfills to circumvent the permitting process, a key issue for TCE.

### Bad Precedent-Setting Trash Deal Stopped in Travis County

After years of negotiations and public hearings,

Travis County Judge Sam Biscoe and other members of the Travis County Commissioners Court ended their efforts to negotiate contracts with BFI and Waste Management that would have prevented the County from opposing major expansions at their problem landfills in Northeast Travis County.

TCE has been working with the Northeast Action Group and other advocates, including Commissioner Ron Davis, to oppose contracts that would sideline the County from protecting residents, area businesses and the environment in the upcoming fight over expansion plans.

BFI and Waste Management have submitted applications to expand the side-by-side landfills and a major fight is anticipated.

- Expanding the information that can be used to define the floodplain beyond FEMA maps
- Increasing the buffer zone from 50 feet to 125 feet for landfills taking household and industrial waste

However, the state environmental agency failed a number of issues to adequately strengthen our trash standards. The buffer increase is too small and does not apply to landfills that take mainly construction waste, or to transfer stations and other waste facilities. Landfills in Texas will not undergo thorough regular reviews that term limits would have required. The rules do not go far enough to protect water from contamination.

However, the state agency and the state legislature will be continuing to work on trash standards. TCE has put new issues on the agenda and demonstrated that there is widespread concerns about trash standards.

### Some Gains At the State Capitol

Earlier in 2005, TCE staff and others worked at the State Capitol on legislation affecting trash issues.

TCE played a role in defeating two bad bills in the state legislature. SB 1542 and HB 2758 would have cut back the process allowing for the public to get a fair hearing if they oppose polluters moving into their neighborhoods.

Two bills, HB 754 and HB 1053, both were signed into law and will especially help neighbors of trash facilities. HB 754 requires that commercial trash trucks must cover their load with a tarp to insure trash is not spilled into our communities. HB 1053 restricts future landfills in Montgomery County.

**TAKE ACTION!** Ask candidates for state office if they will work to strengthen standards for trash facilities and to require producer takeback recycling to keep toxics from electronics out of our water and air.



### Williamson County Landfill Expansion Plans Stalled

In February 2005, TCE and many others formally opposed the planned expansion of the Williamson County landfill, which has been operated by Waste Management. The breadth of opposition put an end to efforts to use a two-step permit approval process.

TCE participated in a public hearing on the proposed expansion in August 2005. Then in December 2005, the County voted to pay Waste Management for their permit application expenses. Perhaps the County is dissatisfied with how the company is handling the landfill and looking for another operator. Stay tuned!

MARCH

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**TCE Annual Meeting***Celebrate TCE's 15th Anniversary!*

Tour an internationally reknown green building center at our annual membership meeting and potluck.

**Sunday March 26 from 1:00 - 3:00 pm**

Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems

8604 FM 969 Austin TX

Please RSVP to 512-326-5655 or robin@texasenvironment.org

**Directions:** From IH 35 head east on MLK. Cross Hwy 183 & MLK becomes FM 969. Go 1.5 miles and CMPBS is at top of the hill before Decker Lane.



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**611 S. Congress Ave. Suite 200**

**Austin, TX 78704**

**TCE Wish List**

Texas Campaign for the Environment operates on a lean budget. Your support with our wish list will help TCE use more of our resources to organize citizen voices and confront policies that don't have the public's best interest in mind.

- volunteers
- working digital cameras
- working LCD projectors
- working photocopier
- working scanners
- working plain paper faxes
- A/C for a vehicle in Austin
- A/C for a vehicle in DFW
- working minivan or Suburban



If you can make a donation to our wish list, please call Austin office at (512) 326-5655 or the Dallas office at (214) 599-7840.

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**TCE Organizes Public Outcry to Save Fort Worth's Trinity Park**

On December 17, 2005, TCE organizers started a lightning quick campaign in Fort Worth to raise awareness and spur citizen engagement about little-known plans to erect a four-lane thoroughfare in and over a large section of Trinity Park, the city's oldest, most historic park, deeded to the public in 1892.

According to the plan proposed by several members of City Council, a swath of parkland would have been converted to a high-traffic roadway at times elevated thirty feet above the park without widespread public input or consent.

TCE mobilized Fort Worth residents, generating letters, phone calls and e-mails to Mayor Mike Moncrief and members of the Council. Over the course of just five weeks, TCE supporters generated 1,405 personal letters - in addition to scores of residents who testified before the City Council. This public outcry led to an agreement to re-route the proposed thoroughfare and to save Trinity Park from further encroachment.

While Fort Worth voters have the power to decide whether parkland can be sold, a charter amendment would be needed for voters to have the final say over diverting parklands for other uses. Unfortunately, the City Council did not agree to propose such a charter amendment.

Texas Campaign for the Environment continued to stretch its dollars and concentrate on our mission of protecting the public health and the environment of Texas. Here's an overview of where our funds came from and what they were spent on.

**Where TCE's contributions come from: \***

- 94.7%** grassroots contributions & memberships
- 1.3%** reimbursed expenses
- 4%** restricted gifts

**Where your contributions go: \***

- 74%** environmental & public health advocacy
- 18%** fundraising
- 8%** management

\* based on IRS form 990 for 2004

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