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Recycling and Waste Management Groups Tell Hill E-waste Disposal is Safe *NSWMA and SWANA Correct Assumptions about Electronic Products*

AUGUST 10, 2005 (WASHINGTON, DC) -- "Recycling electronics should be the first priority waste management option, but we write to assure you that these products can be safely managed in Subtitle D (municipal solid waste) landfills" wrote Bruce Parker, CEO of the National Solid Wastes Management Association (NSWMA) and John Skinner, CEO of the Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) in a joint letter to Senator John Thune, Chairman of the U.S. Senate Superfund and Solid Waste Management Subcommittee.

Skinner and Parker were responding to incorrect allegations made at the subcommittee's July 26 hearing on electronic product recycling that materials such as cathode ray tubes commonly found in television sets and computer monitors could not be safely managed in today's highly engineered and extensively regulated municipal solid waste (MSW) landfills.

SWANA's Applied Research Foundation found that natural processes occurring within a MSW landfill, such as precipitation and absorption, effectively inhibit heavy metals from dissolving into the leachate or being released from the landfill in the form of landfill gas. The final report, "The Effectiveness of Municipal Solid Waste Landfills in Controlling the Releases of Heavy Metals to the Environment" (which can be found on www.swanastore.com), establishes that landfill liner systems substantially prevent the leaking of leachate from the landfill to the land upon which the landfill is constructed. Due to the effectiveness of the landfill liner systems that have been constructed with good quality assurance programs, studies indicate that 99 percent or more of the leachate generated in MSW landfills is collected and treated by recirculation or other on-site or off-site wastewater treatment systems.

Parker pointed out that while the lead in cathode ray tubes can fail the Toxicity Characteristics Leaching Procedure (TCLP), EPA's test for determining if a substance should be regulated as a hazardous waste, EPA itself notes that the test is a conservative, worst-case scenario. Moreover, EPA's Science Advisory Board has raised questions about the use of TCLP. As a result, Skinner and Parker wrote "Based on our understanding of the results of numerous studies and our understanding of normal operations at a Subtitle D landfill, we believe the allegations made at the hearing that toxic leachate generated from CRTs and other electronic products is going into ground water are without factual basis."

In the letter, the two CEOs wrote, "We respect the dangers that lead can cause to human health. As owners and operators of Subtitle D landfills, our members are dedicated to protecting the public health and the environment."

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SWANA and NSWMA represent companies and professionals in the solid waste and recycling industries. SWANA is a professional education association in the solid waste management field with members from both the public and private sectors. NSWMA is a not-for-profit trade association representing private sector solid waste collection, disposal and recycling companies.