



SOLID WASTE AGENCY OF LAKE COUNTY, IL

PRESS RELEASE

Date: March 4, 2016

Contact: Walter Willis, Executive Director, 847-377-4951

SWALCO Discontinues Electronic Recycling Program Due to Lack of Funds

After subsidizing the electronics recycling program with local tax dollars to comply with a State law mandating electronics recycling, the Solid Waste Agency of Lake County's (SWALCO) Board of Directors is discontinuing the program due to lack of funds.

The Board held an emergency meeting on March 3 to discuss options and decided to close its five remaining collection sites effective May 1, 2016.

"The agency was faced with an unanticipated mandate to pay for collecting electronics, and regrettably we cannot afford to pay more when we are already providing nearly \$150,000 per year in manpower and equipment at the five collection sites," said SWALCO Chairman Larry Mount, a Round Lake Beach trustee.

SWALCO is working with a group of nearly 15 other units of local government throughout the State that also collect electronics to amend the current State law to ensure better access to electronic collection programs and to address the lack of funding to pay for the recycling.

According to Walter Willis, SWALCO Executive Director, "It is our goal to work with the other stakeholders, including the electronics manufacturers and recyclers, to develop a more sustainable program so that our residents are able to comply with the law, which currently bans 18 items from the landfill, including TVs."

Willis added, "After May 1, Lake County residents will face challenges due to the lack of recycling options, especially TV's, and that has SWALCO and its members very concerned. Worsening the situation is Best Buy's recent discontinuation of accepting old TVs from Illinois residents."

The SWALCO Board of Directors indicated it will continue to evaluate options to keep its program operating after May 1, but at this point, the agency does not have an option that does not involve significant costs. The agency will develop and post a list of locations in or near Lake County that accept electronics, though most locations, such as Best Buy, Staples and Goodwill will likely not accept TV's.

In the meantime, Lake County residents should continue to use the five collection sites located in Waukegan, Highland Park, Grayslake, Grant Township and Cuba Township, which will remain open until May 1. Information on the location and hours for the collection sites can be found on the website, www.swalco.org.

“Lake County residents have created the largest and most successful electronics collection program in the State, we are very proud of the program, and to see it likely come to an end is very disappointing,” Willis said.