

**RESPONSIBLE
E-RECYCLING:**
Protecting the
Environment
and National
Security



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The Need for Responsible E-waste Export & Recycling Policies

From the smartphone in your pocket to the PC on your desk and beyond, technology constantly grows more pervasive in every area of our lives. But all those devices have a limited lifespan. As a result, electronic waste (e-waste) is the fastest-growing segment of the waste stream in the U.S. and globally. According to the World Economic Forum, the U.S. is the world's second-largest e-waste producer by volume at 6.3 million tons per year.

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E-waste is often incinerated or dumped in landfills or makes its way around the world to be pulled apart by hand or burned by the world’s poorest, to the detriment of health and the environment.

— World Economic Forum, January 2019

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E-waste: A global environmental threat. E-waste contains toxic materials such as lead, PCBs, mercury and many more, so responsible recycling methods are essential to protecting the environment and the health of workers. Yet American e-waste is often exported to developing countries in Africa and Asia where laws protecting the environment and workers are weak and rarely enforced.

U.S. e-waste exports fuel counterfeiting that threaten national security. E-waste exports provide feedstock for electronics counterfeiters, based primarily in China. A U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee study found more than one million fake parts in military equipment, raising serious reliability concerns for the men and women in our military. The report noted that counterfeiters use microchips stripped from e-waste, much of it exported from the United States, as their raw materials. For instance, in 2019 a U.S. electronics distributor was convicted of selling counterfeit parts that ended up in a classified weapons system.

The **Secure E-waste Export and Recycling Act (SEERA)** will require domestic recycling of untested, nonworking e-waste, which is most likely to end up in an e-waste dump overseas or in the hands of counterfeiters. The legislation includes export exemptions for materials considered low risk, including tested, working equipment.



COALITION FOR AMERICAN
Electronics **Recycling**

SEERA: Sustainability Meets Security

Unlike all other developed countries, the U.S. lacks a national policy on e-waste exports. In addition, the U.S. is one of a handful of countries that have not signed the Basel Convention, a global treaty signed by 180 countries that restricts exports of e-waste because it contains hazardous materials.

Responsible e-waste recyclers are certified to the e-Stewards and/or R2 standards that address exports and other practices. But given the lack of a national policy it is easy for unscrupulous brokers to promise customers responsible recycling but then "pack and stack" the e-waste onto ships bound for developing countries. It's a highly profitable business model that poisons the land, air and water in impoverished communities while contributing to counterfeiting.

By requiring domestic processing of America's e-scrap, **SEERA** will ensure it is processed to high standards that protect the environment and workers. Equally important, we will choke off the flow exports that fuel an illicit counterfeit trade that undermines the reliability of military technology.

Through **SEERA**, the United States will finally **gain better control of the export** of all hazardous, untreated and untested e-waste.

In addition, **SEERA** will promote:



Job Creation

Create over **42,000 new jobs** with nearly a billion dollars in annual payroll



Business Growth

Enable American e-recyclers to attract investment, expand capacity and create jobs



Increase Trade

Grow exports of tested, working electronics and commodity-grade material



Data Security

Close security gaps that have led to data breaches, identity theft, and cybercrime

About Us The Coalition for American Electronics Recycling (CAER) is the voice of the emerging e-waste recycling industry on Capitol Hill. Our industry will play an integral role in addressing the e-waste problem by providing secure, domestic e-recycling services for government and businesses. CAER includes more than 150 companies and supporting members operating more than 300 facilities in 37 states as well as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia.

For more information, visit:

AmericanErecycling.org

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