



STATEMENT



e-Waste Recycling Industry on the Brink

October 14, 2015. Seattle, WA. Today, according to Lex18 News of Lexington Kentucky, Global Environmental Services (GES) [confessed to dumping](#) and burying televisions and other electronics in a large hole dug behind their warehouse. GES had collected the used electronics to recycle, but unfortunately it appears GES chose a cheaper alternative, but at a cost to the environment and more.

GES was previously an e-Stewards certified recycler; however, shortly after an e-Stewards witnessed audit in late July (audit details are confidential), GES elected to withdraw from the e-Stewards certification program, and therefore was not certified to the e-Stewards Standard at the time of the recent discovery.

Burying hazardous waste is never acceptable unless this occurs in a hazardous waste or specially controlled landfill built to contain and mitigate damage to the groundwater and future generations.



Late last year, BAN investigated and uncovered an [operation in Georgia](#), where an R2 certified company, Diversified Recycling, was using an operator that smashed the hazardous TV and monitor glass and sent it to a construction landfill that was not authorized to receive hazardous e-waste. Also last year, BAN contributed to an investigation of [Stone Castle, LLC](#), an e-waste recycling company in Utah, which had three separate suspect fires that consumed three stockpiles of TVs and computer monitors, and created a toxic waste emergency. These are just a few recent examples of

e-waste recyclers engaged in egregious acts of unscrupulous mismanagement of e-waste.

While these acts are inexcusable choices by private companies, it is critical for waste generators to understand that increasing incidents of abandonment, illegal dumping, and burning, are occurring now within the context of a larger problem: the e-recycling industry is no longer being adequately paid by customers, including manufacturers involved in state-legislated producer responsibility schemes, to manage their toxic electronics and private data in a responsible manner. These problems are due to the recent devaluation of commodities (e.g. copper, steel, plastic) on the world market as a result of China's stalled growth. The result: many e-recyclers are being left holding the nation's consumer and corporate e-waste, with inadequate resources to responsibly manage it and remain profitable.

"It's easy to point fingers at individual recyclers to lay the obvious blame, when in fact we have a larger systemic problem that must be addressed at once," said Sarah Westervelt, policy director for the e-Stewards program. *"Everyone, including those running state e-waste programs, must realize that things have changed -- recycling is a service that must be well paid for."*

BAN has created a program considered the gold standard for e-waste recyclers known as [e-Stewards](#). Not only are these recyclers audited yearly but are subject to unannounced on-site inspections. Further, BAN conducts investigations to uncover illegal dumping at home or abroad. These programs have been positively embraced by recyclers and their customers.

The e-Stewards program provides the needed transparency, due diligence, and performance requirements to ensure safe and ethical recycling. However, as the commodity value of e-waste no longer funds its responsible management, state programs, companies and all of us who use electronics, must step up and be willing to adequately fund responsible care of these devices at the end of their useful lives.

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About e-Stewards® Certification

The e-Stewards® Initiative is a market-based solution to help individuals and organizations identify and promote those electronics recyclers that ensure that used electronics are managed with the highest standards of environmental and social responsibility. e-Stewards Certified Recyclers are audited and certified to ensure highest levels of responsibility and e-Stewards Enterprises are major corporations, municipalities or institutions that agree to make best efforts to make use of e-Stewards Certified Recyclers. For more information about the e-Stewards Initiative visit: www.e-Stewards.org or blog.e-Stewards.org, and follow [@e-Stewards](https://twitter.com/e-Stewards) on Twitter.

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