

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

The SWAC Subcommittee is discussing how to develop and implement an electronic products recycling system for the following reasons:

1. Electronic products have increased as a portion of the disposed solid waste stream in Washington State as they have throughout the nation and world. Electronic products are a complex combinations of materials; compounds that do not exist naturally in the environment. Some of those compounds contain hazardous substances that can pose risks to human health and the environment. Moreover, electronics have not typically been designed with reuse and recycling in mind. It is unknown what the long-term effects of some newly created compounds will be. With prices continuing to fall, and new electronic products introduced almost daily, the stream of electronic products reaching the end of their useful life is projected to only grow.
2. Production of electronic products requires significant amounts of natural resources. Extraction of raw materials has a greater cost to the economy and the environment than does materials reutilization. Therefore, it may be prudent to recover materials and products for remanufacturing and reutilization.
3. If developed with the marketplace in mind, collection, transportation and processing of materials for remanufacturing and reutilization could stimulate local economies by creating jobs and business opportunities. Moreover, reducing possible threats to health and environment may reduce business liability over the long haul.
4. The current infrastructure to collect and process recyclables was created for traditional wastes. It has not kept pace with the unique handling requirements needed to collect and process electronic products.
5. Consumers and other electronic waste generators desire convenient recycling opportunities. Many existing laws, rules, guidelines, plans and recommendations create a need for development of electronic recycling options for electronics for various sectors and generators.