

THE BEDFORD CITIZEN

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

MAY 12, 2016

So you thought you were doing the right thing by recycling your computer and printer? Think again. Donate still-working computers to be re-used, Saturday, May 21st, 1-4PM, 200 Carlisle Rd, Bedford. Transition Town Bedford will be donating accepted computers to local veterans living in transitional housing. We will erase data from working computers that boot from a USB-port or a DVD-drive.

In case you need one more reason to drop off your extra or older working computer on May 21st, we strongly recommend your watching the short news story that aired on PBS 5/8/2016: "Watchdog group tracks what really happens to your "recycled" ewaste."

Unfortunately, this e-waste content, instead of being safely recycled, is often being sent to Hong Kong, China and Thailand. Independent observers, including scientists from MIT, have observed toxic pools, generated from the electronic waste, on the ground at recycling centers. Workers are unprotected from know carcinogens. They don't even know they are working with toxic materials. Again, this appears to be happening even within "legitimate" waste recycling programs.

It is small wonder a recent UN University study warned of significant long-term health impacts on workers, families and neighboring communities due to exposure to e-waste. The metals contained in PC's commonly include: aluminum, *antimony*, *arsenic*, barium, beryllium, *cadmium*, *chromium*, *cobalt*, copper, gallium, gold, iron, *lead*, manganese, *mercury*, palladium, platinum, *selenium*, silver and zinc. Eight of these metals (shown in italics) are listed as hazardous by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).

With 20-50 million tons of e-waste discarded last year alone, this is both an environmental and social justice problem. The US is also the only country in the world that does not have a nationwide policy to stop e-waste from being sent to developing countries. Half of US states have no computer waste laws on at all.

We hope you will drop off your working laptop or desktop computer on Saturday, May 21st between 1-4 PM. For more information, visit us at: www.bedfordtransition.org.

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Transition Town Bedford