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Department of Ecology News Release - September 1, 2016

Electronics recycler fined \$444,000 for illegally disposing of dangerous waste overseas

Total Reclaim sent TVs and monitors to China, exposing workers and environment to toxic mercury

SEATTLE - The Washington Department of Ecology has fined Seattle-based electronics recycler Total Reclaim Inc. \$444,000 for illegally disposing of flat-screen televisions and monitors with fluorescent tubes containing toxic mercury. The company shipped the flat screens to Hong Kong, where they were broken apart in the open by unprotected workers.

"Total Reclaim has been a leading electronics recycler in Washington, so they knew what they were doing was wrong," said Laurie Davies, manager of Ecology's Waste 2 Resources program. "This penalty is a reminder that recyclers can't take shortcuts when it comes to properly managing toxic chemicals."

Total Reclaim's actions were revealed in an investigation by the Basel Action Network, a nonprofit group that certifies electronics recyclers for [E-Cycle Washington](#) and similar programs. The Basel Action Network attached GPS tracking beacons to electronics, then dropped off the units at recycling facilities. The group followed some of the trackers to Hong Kong, and filmed how the flat screens were dismantled and disposed of.

Total Reclaim later admitted that it sent the flat screens to undocumented recycling facilities and that it withheld information from customers and auditors. The company provided records to Ecology that showed it shipped flat screens overseas beginning seven years ago.

Washington law requires electronics recyclers to either properly recycle e-waste themselves, or ensure that it is legitimately recycled elsewhere. E-Cycle Washington was set up to prevent the toxic materials in old electronics from ending up in the environment, whether here in Washington or elsewhere in the world.

The flat screens illegally disposed of by Total Reclaim represent a small portion of all of the electronics collected for recycling in Washington. So despite the actions of Total Reclaim, Ecology believes it is important to continue recycling electronics to keep lead, mercury and other toxics out of the environment.

Washington residents can recycle TVs, monitors, computers and other electronics for free at participating [E-Cycle Washington](#) locations. For questions about where other items can be recycled, call or visit [1-800-RECYCLE](#).

Total Reclaim has 30 days to pay the penalty or may file an appeal with the [Washington State Pollution Control Hearings Board](#).

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