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Senators Whitehouse and Alexander Introduce Secure E-waste Export and Recycling Act

Legislation Will Limit Exports Linked to National Security and Environmental Concerns

Washington, DC – The Coalition of American Electronics Recycling (CAER), the voice of the emerging e-waste industry on Capitol Hill, today praised Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN) for their leadership in introducing the Secure E-Waste Export and Recycling Act (SEERA). This legislation will prevent the flow of untested, nonworking electronic scrap commonly used by counterfeiters based primarily in China.

“Americans are cycling through broken smartphones, computers, and televisions faster than ever,” said Whitehouse. “We need to do a better job of keeping that electronic waste out of the hands of foreign counterfeiters who are working to sneak fake products into our military supply chain. In addition to shoring up a national security threat, our legislation would support the domestic recycling industry, create new jobs here at home, and dispose of our electronic waste in a sustainable way.”

“As Americans increasingly use more technology, electronic waste is a growing concern not only to our environment, but also to American consumers and businesses,” said Alexander. “This legislation will help limit the flow of electronic waste to countries who do not dispose of it properly, protect our military electronics, and preserve jobs in the U.S.”

The legislation was also recently introduced in the House of Representatives ([HR3559](#)) by Rep. Raul Espallat (D-NY) and Rep. Paul Cook (R-CA).

SEERA would add untested, non-working e-waste used by counterfeiters to a list of materials restricted under the Export Control Reform Act of 2018 due to national security concerns. Materials at low risk for counterfeiting would be exempted from restrictions, including:

- Tested, working used electronics
- E-scrap that has been shredded or demanufactured, which may be exported for use as feedstock for smelters and other recycling processes
- Recalled electronics, which may be exported for repairs

“We thank Senator Whitehouse and Senator Alexander for their leadership in introducing this important legislation,” said Bob Houghton, CEO of Sage Sustainable Electronics and a founding member of CAER. “Through swift passage of SEERA, the Senate can combat counterfeiters who undermine our national security while ensuring electronic scrap is managed in an environmentally responsible way.”

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“As a long-time CAER member, we appreciate the efforts of Senator Whitehouse and Senator Alexander in supporting SEERA, which will protect our military men and women who are at risk because of counterfeit electronic components,” said Stephen Rowland of Glencore. “Equally important, SEERA will ensure e-waste is processed domestically to our industry’s high standards for environmental and employee safety.”

By requiring domestic recycling of e-scrap, SEERA will increase high-value exports of refurbished computer equipment and commodity-grade material refined from used electronics. The export reforms will also enable U.S. recyclers to attract investment, expand capacity and create up to 42,000 quality jobs for Americans.

SEERA addresses an issue first identified in a [Senate Armed Services Committee study](#) that found 1,800 cases of counterfeit parts in military technology, including helicopters, cargo planes, submarines, thermal weapons site, and missile control systems. The report states “much of the material used to make counterfeit electronic parts is electronic waste, or e-waste, shipped from the United States and the rest of the world to China.”

Defense experts have also raised concerns that malware can be placed on counterfeits to help hackers and cyber-terrorists launch attacks. Reflecting a threat to public safety, counterfeits have been found in intravenous drip machines, automated external defibrillators used to save heart attack victims, airport runway lighting systems, and braking systems for high-speed trains. E-waste exports have also been linked to data security breaches and cyber crime. For more details, read a [summary of the bill](#) on the CAER website.

About CAER

The Coalition for American Electronics Recycling is the voice of the emerging e-waste recycling industry on Capitol Hill. Our industry will play an integral role in the fight against counterfeits 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.