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Business & Stocks

Top stories from the San Jose Mercury News

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Tossing TVs, PC screens gets banned

Massachusetts is first to address toxic issues

BY MARTIN FINUCANE

Associated Press

BOSTON -- With electronic equipment becoming obsolete at an increasingly rapid rate, Massachusetts is instituting the nation's first ban on the disposal of computer screens, TV sets and other glass picture tubes in landfills and incinerators.

Environmental officials say they are trying to head off a flood of potentially toxic electronic junk.

"It's a good public health and environmental move," said John McNabb, solid waste policy director at Clean Water Action of New England. "We hope that it is replicated nationwide."

California doesn't have such a policy and environmental non-profit organization Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition said there are few places in the state for people to drop off their computer monitors for recycling.

Michael Bender, a consultant to the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition, said environmental groups are pushing for computer manufacturers to pay for collection centers and recycling of computer screens.

"Taxpayers shouldn't pay for the cleanup. Manufacturers should step up to the plate," Bender said.

The new regulations in Massachusetts take effect today and mean

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responsible for taking their products back once they have become obsolete.

But Alec Rosen, a spokesman for Apple Computer Inc., said, "I don't think that's realistic. It's about as realistic as Detroit being responsible for taking cars back."

He suggested people donate their used computers to schools or charities.

"All of them would love to take a good computer off of someone's hands," he said. "There are a lot of good uses for old computers, Macs and PCs."

Mercury News Staff Writer Cecilia Kang contributed to this report.

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