



Wisconsin State Legislature

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SENATOR JERRY PETROWSKI
SENATOR JANET BEWLEY
REPRESENTATIVE JAMES EDMING

MARCH 8, 2022
(608) 266-2502
(608) 266-3510
(608) 266-7506

HAZARDOUS WASTE CLEAN UP BILL PASSES SENATE

(Madison)...A bill to require the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to contract for the cleanup of contaminated lead glass and other electronic waste materials left behind by “5R Processors Limited” passed the Wisconsin State Senate today. The bill, Assembly Bill 943, was authored by Senators Jerry Petrowski (R-Marathon) and Janet Bewley (D-Mason) and Representatives James Edming and passed the Senate on a unanimous 32-0 vote.

“Without help from the state the burden for properly disposing these harmful chemicals and hazardous waste would have ultimately fallen on local governments and taxpayers,” said Senator Petrowski. “My office worked with the DNR to make this proposal as simple as possible for them to administer -- and I really believe this is the best available solution to a bad situation.”

5R Processors was an electronics recycling company formerly based in Ladysmith. Investigations by the DNR and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) led to the prosecution of the leadership of the company by the U.S. Attorney for the Western District. While most of the legal matters that arose from the situation have been resolved, millions of pounds of electronic waste were left behind without a responsible party to clean it up. The electronic waste is currently contained in several semi-trailers and warehouse facilities located in Rusk, Price, and Washington Counties.

“This is great news for Price County, which I represent, as well as other parts of the state. I want to thank Senator Petrowski for his leadership on this issue and his willingness to work across the aisle on good public policy,” said Senator Bewley.

The bill directs the DNR to contract with a third party for the removal and proper disposal of this waste using \$2.5 million in segregated funds from the state’s environmental management account.

“I am pleased to see this important legislation clear the Senate,” said Representative Edming. “While we would all like to see those who are responsible for this hazardous waste pay for the cost of the cleanup, they are likely to never have the money to do so. This bill is a big step forward in helping the communities impacted by 5R.”

The bill, which also passed the Assembly on a unanimous 96-0 vote last week, is now headed to Governor Tony Evers where it is expected to be signed into law.

“This bill shows that bipartisanship in Madison is not dead,” added Senator Petrowski. “Legislators from both sides of the aisle came together to tackle the problem that 5R Processors irresponsibly left behind. In just over six weeks, our legislation cleared both the assembly and senate with unanimous support and now is likely to become law because we all worked together. I want to thank the local officials – especially Ladysmith Administrator Al Christianson – who brought this to our attention and have been careful stewards of their taxpayers’ dollars.”

###