

PITCH-IN CANADA Media Release

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PITCH-IN CANADA's Cell Phone Collection Program Diverts Thousands of phones from Landfill

Canada's Non-Profits Are Making Up for
Shortfalls in Provincial e-waste Legislation

Modifications to provincial legislation aimed at recycling e-waste have consistently failed to include cellular phones in the list of consumer products which can and should be reused and recycled.

Cell phones are Canada's number one selling electronic product for consumers, with multi-millions being sold annually. Industry officials estimate that Canadians replaced more than 6 million cellular phones in 2007 alone.

Cellular devices, as opposed to other electronic consumer products, have intrinsically short product life cycles due to the rapid pace of changes in technology. In addition, marketing strategies of mobile service carriers often promote annual trade-in opportunities or discounted upgrade incentive programs to increase sales of new cell phones or other mobile devices.

Due to the lack of inclusion of cellular phones in provincial or federal governmental legislation, Canadian communities and the environment pay the price by facing the threat of leaching toxins from landfills as a result of improperly disposed of cellular phones.

Some non-profit and charitable organizations have stepped forward to fill the gap that provincial governments have failed to cover with their recycling legislation. One national group which operates a cell phone collection program aimed at diverting dangerous toxins out of local landfills is PITCH-IN CANADA, a national non-profit organization established in 1967.

"It is surprising that, considering the concern which Canadians have for maintaining a quality environment and the phenomenal growth in the recycling industry, that cell phones are still not included in provincial recycling legislation across Canada," says The National Cell Phone Collection Program Manager, Misha Cook.



“Whereas it may be good news for non-profit groups who are using programs such as ours to assist in fundraising for their social and environmental causes, it is our environment that continues to lose out.”

PITCH-IN CANADA’s National Cell Phone Collection Program has collected tens of thousands of cell phones and, in partnership with a recycling industry partner, has either recycled or refurbished them for reuse. Cook is quick to point out that while PITCH-IN’s program has seen national success, the thousands of phones collected are minimal compared to the millions that are estimated to be improperly discarded each year.

“Whether reusing and recycling obsolete cellular phones is made mandatory by legislation or promoted by private programs such as ours, we need people to know that cellular phones need to be disposed of properly, and that this can be done easily, locally, and often benefit a good cause,” says Cook.

PITCH-IN CANADA’s National Cell Phone Program supports 800+ cell phone recycling collectors across the country. Local collector groups register online at www.pitch-in.ca and, using a Starter Kit provided by PITCH-IN CANADA, set up their cell phone collection and recycling program in their community. When 50 cell phones have been collected PITCH-IN CANADA arranges and pays for FedEx to pick up the phones.

“What is fantastic about our cell phone program is that all of our collectors are local. They run their programs and reap the benefits from their collection program and they know that by educating their local community about the potential danger of improperly disposed of phones they are helping to keep toxins out of their backyard.”

For more information about PITCH-IN CANADA’s National Cell Phone Collection Program visit www.pitch-in.ca or contact PITCH-IN CANADA’s National Office at Box 45011, Ocean Park PO, White Rock, BC, V4A 9L1.