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Report: State must do more to recycle waste

BY **MATT PILON**

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A series of stewardship programs Connecticut has implemented since 2011 have caused a sizeable dent in the collection and recycling of paint, mattresses, electronic waste and mercury thermostats, but more action is needed, according to a recent report.

The Product Stewardship Institute's report recommends extending state requirements for recycling electronic scraps, which currently only apply to residents, to small businesses, nonprofits and schools. The institute also said the state should encourage better municipal data reporting on recovery rates and costs, and require more outreach to educate residents about electronic scrap, as many are unaware of the law and where they can bring scrap for recycling.

PSI submitted the report to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection in October and published it on its own website late last month. DEEP emailed the report to media on Thursday.

The four Connecticut programs have diverted more than 26 million pounds of materials from the waste stream -- which will help the state try to reach its goal of 60 percent diversion by 2024 -- created a cumulative annual cost savings of more than \$2.6 million per year for municipalities, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions, the report said.

Despite that, some states are performing better. For example, Rhode Island and New Hampshire collected more thermostats per capita, and Oregon and Vermont collected more paint.

PSI recommends that Connecticut study those programs to see how it can improve.

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