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EPA, Partners Answer the Call to Recycle

(Washington, D.C. - January 8, 2008) The nation's leading cell phone makers, service providers and retailers have teamed up with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to answer America's call for easy cell phone recycling. Susan Bodine, EPA's assistant administrator for the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response, launched the Plug-In To eCycling "Recycle Your Cell Phone. It's An Easy Call" Campaign today at the International Consumer Electronics Show. Plug-In partners supporting the campaign include AT&T Wireless, Best Buy, LG Electronics, Nokia, Office Depot, Samsung, Sony Ericsson, Sprint, Staples, and T-Mobile.

"Thanks to our Plug-In partners' efforts, recycling an old cell phone has become a quick and easy way for Americans to protect the environment," said Assistant Administrator Bodine. "By dropping it off at a store or mailing it in, Americans have more recycling options today than ever before."

To kick-off the campaign, EPA released a series of print public service announcements that tout the convenience and environmental and social benefits of recycling a cell phone. EPA also released a podcast and Web site that address many common questions and concerns.

EPA has targeted cell phone recycling because, despite the large number of manufacturer and retailer-led collection programs, many consumers still do not know where or how they can recycle their unwanted cell phones. Consequently, less than 20 percent of unwanted cell phones are recycled each year.

Recycling a cell phone offers an opportunity for everyone to help reduce climate change, save energy, and conserve natural resources. At least 100 million cell phones are no longer in use, according to EPA's conservative estimates. If Americans recycled all 100 million phones, we could save enough upstream energy to power more than 194,000 U.S. households for a year. If consumers were able to reuse those 100 million cell phones, the environmental savings would be even greater, saving enough energy to power more than 370,000 US homes each year.

Plug-In To eCycling is a voluntary partnership between EPA and electronics manufacturers and retailers to offer consumers more opportunities to donate or recycle their used electronics. In 2007, as part of their commitment to the program, retailers and electronics manufacturers voluntarily recycled more than 47 million pounds of electronics, mostly computers and televisions. For example, in 2007 Staples and Office Depot both launched in-store electronics take back programs across the continental U.S. and Sony teamed up with Waste Management to expand local TV recycling opportunities. Efforts like these have helped the Plug-In program to recycle more than 142 million pounds of electronics since 2003.

EPA's Plug-In to eCycling Partners include: AT&T, Best Buy, Dell, eBay's Rethink initiative, HP, Intel, JVC, Lexmark, LG Electronics, Motorola, NEC Display, Nokia, Office Depot, Panasonic, Philips, Samsung, Sharp, Sony, Sony Ericsson, Sprint, Staples, Toshiba, and Wal-Mart.

More information about the Plug-In program and its partners: <http://www.epa.gov/plugin/>
More information about the Cell Phone Recycling Campaign: <http://www.epa.gov/cellphones/>
More information about electronics recycling: <http://www.epa.gov/ecycling/>

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