

Washington, DC (Mar. 19, 2012) — Rep. Gerald Connolly, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations, and Procurement Reform, issued the following statement in response to a [GAO report released today](#) that found that although there have been improvements, many federal agencies fail to dispose of electronic waste in an environmentally responsible manner:

“As the Congressman from Northern Virginia’s large high tech industry, I know that there’s no excuse for improper electronic waste disposal when America’s high tech companies can recycle electronic waste in an environmentally sound manner.”

In its report, GAO found that:

- An estimated 10,000 computers are discarded by the federal government every week, each containing substances such as lead and mercury that could leak into the soil and groundwater.

- The Obama administration has gone farther to require annually updated strategic sustainability plans by issuing Executive Order 13514 and releasing an interagency report entitled ‘National Strategy for Electronics Stewardship’ last July. These measures have aided the federal government in responsibly dealing with surplus electronics, but the problem persists.

- Agencies are required to donate, exchange, sell, or recycle obsolete equipment. However, they are not required to determine whether products are handled in an environmentally sound way. When government agencies choose to recycle electronic components, those materials may actually be exported to developing countries that have less stringent environmental and health standards than that of the U.S. Once there, materials may be discarded as normal waste and left in a landfill, affecting the environment and health of local populations.