

Natural Resources Defense Council

Enactment of groundbreaking electronic waste recycling legislation in NYC

In January 2008, following a three-year campaign spearheaded by NRDC with Overbrook's support, the New York City Council overwhelmingly passed the nation's first municipal comprehensive electronic waste (commonly referred to as "e-waste") recycling law. The measure is based on the producer responsibility model, which requires that manufacturers of electronics take back their products – many of which contain such toxic materials as lead, mercury and cadmium – for recycling at the end of their useful lives. The enactment of this law means that New York City's e-waste will now be recycled rather than being disposed of in landfills or burned in incinerators, from which its toxic components can pose public health and environmental risks. Moreover, because it is producer responsibility-based, it effectively shifts the costs of handling e-waste from the taxpayers to the manufacturers, and provides incentives for manufacturers to design products that are less toxic and easier to recycle in the first instance.

With Overbrook's support, NRDC took the lead in drafting the legislation; identified and worked closely with the bill's primary sponsor; secured additional Council sponsors (at the time of passage, 47 of 51 Council members were signed on to the bill); assembled a diverse coalition of environmental groups, recyclers, manufacturers and retailers in support of the measure; organized lobbying and press events, and secured favorable editorial support in the *New York Times* and other leading New York newspapers; and engaged in negotiations between the Council and the Mayor to craft legislation that would be signed and effectively implemented by the City.

With Overbrook's support, NRDC is now aiming to build on its success in New York City by working to enact similar comprehensive, producer responsibility-based legislation in New York State.

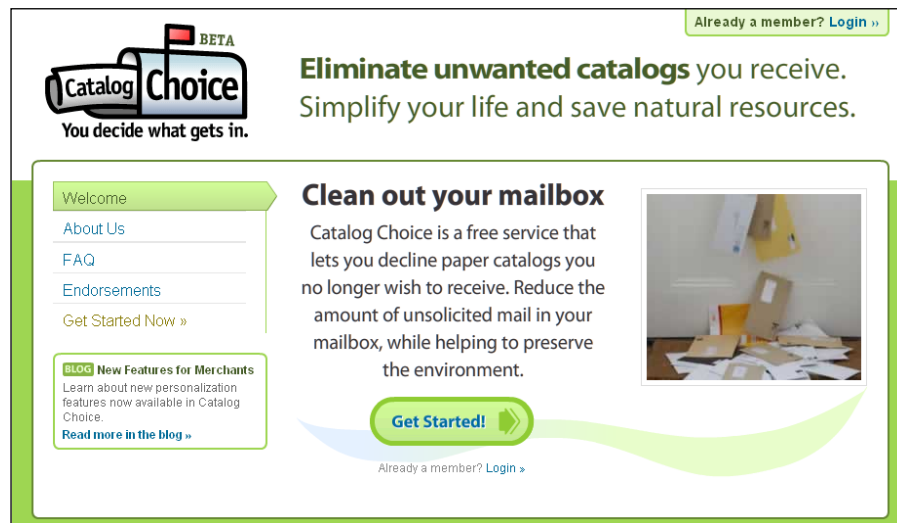
See the New York Times article at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/09/opinion/nyregionopinions/CIewaste.html?scp=3&sq=electronic+waste&st=nyt>

Reducing mailings of wasteful unwanted catalogs

The Natural Resources Defense Council has been working for several years as a member of the Overbrook-organized Catalog Choice Task Force, which has as its core mission the elimination of resource-wasting, unwanted catalogs and the development of a set of environmentally sound best practices for the catalog industry. Last October, the Task Force launched the on-line Catalog Choice service, www.catalogchoice.org, which allows users to simply and at no cost "opt out" of those catalogs they no longer wish to receive. Thanks in large measure to highly positive press,

blog and other word-of-mouth coverage, Catalog Choice has already attained tremendous popularity, signing up more than 650,000 members in its first five months of operation, who have collectively opted out of more than 7 million unwanted catalogs. In addition, Catalog Choice got a tremendous boost on January 24, 2008 when we were featured in [this segment](#) on the Today Show. The segment was part of the “Today Goes Green” series and included an appearance by NRDC Senior Attorney Kate Sinding.



The screenshot shows the Catalog Choice website homepage. At the top left is the logo with a red 'BETA' tag and the tagline 'You decide what gets in.' At the top right is a link 'Already a member? Login >'. The main headline reads 'Eliminate unwanted catalogs you receive. Simplify your life and save natural resources.' Below this is a section titled 'Clean out your mailbox' with a sub-headline 'Catalog Choice is a free service that lets you decline paper catalogs you no longer wish to receive. Reduce the amount of unsolicited mail in your mailbox, while helping to preserve the environment.' To the right of this text is a photograph of a mailbox overflowing with papers. Below the text is a green 'Get Started!' button with a right-pointing arrow. At the bottom of this section is another 'Already a member? Login >' link. On the left side, there is a navigation menu with links for 'Welcome', 'About Us', 'FAQ', 'Endorsements', and 'Get Started Now >'. Below the menu is a 'BLOG' section titled 'New Features for Merchants' with a sub-headline 'Learn about new personalization features now available in Catalog Choice.' and a link 'Read more in the blog >'. The entire page is framed with a green border.

The Task Force is now working hard with merchants, merchant trade associations and other industry players to ensure that catalog mailers voluntarily accept and honor the mail preferences of Catalog Choice’s members. At the same time, the task Force is building relationships with

mailers to assist in its efforts to develop and implement a set of best industry practices.

In addition, Catalog Choice’s huge popularity is having a positive influence on other pre-existing mail reduction options, most notably the Direct Marketing Association’s Mail Preference Service, driving them to adopt easier-to-use, more selective services like that offered by Catalog Choice. The end goal of the Task Force’s activities is an industry-wide transformation to more sustainable, less wasteful catalog mailing practices that are respectful of consumers’ mail delivery preferences.