

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2024-1189

TITLE: Resolution Advocating for the Addition of a Proper On-Campus Battery & Electronic Waste Collection Location

AUTHOR(S): Senator Watson Hewitt, Senator Max Banach

SPONSOR(S): Senator Abby Whitaker, Senator Kishan Nayak, Senator Matt Reich, Senator Maya Idiculla, Senator Samantha Kinggard, Senator Aaron Amster, Senator Owen Lekebusch, Senator Gabriela Prieto, Senator Gabe Vargas, Senator Angelina Fentress, Senator Sarah Hoffer, Senator Raj Mia, Senator Daniel Permane, Senator Allan Rivera Jaramillo, Senator Zach Arzt, Senator Chalisa Budhai, Senator Arturo Zárrate, Senator Isha Khan, Senator Hunter Monson, Senator Elizabeth Insuasti, Senator Michael Lim, Green Caucus Chair Zoe Richter, Pride Student Union President Jonathan Chance Stephens

WHEREAS, according to the World Health Organization, electronic waste (e-waste) can pollute the air, soil, and water by releasing dangerous chemicals into the environment, posing a considerable risk to human health not limited to cancer and neurological damage [1]; and,

WHEREAS, many of the batteries used in common electronic devices employed by University of Florida students contain toxic heavy metals such as mercury, lead, lithium, cadmium, and nickel metal hydride [1][2]; and,

WHEREAS, according to estimates from the US Environmental Protection Agency, 60% of discarded electronics wind up in the trash [3]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida Facilities Services currently has a goal to “divert 90% of UF Waste from landfills” [4]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida recognizes non-alkaline batteries as “Universal Waste” not meant to be disposed of in regular waste disposal bins [5]; and,

WHEREAS, the current e-waste collection sites - HUB and UF Surplus - do not accept chargers, used batteries, smartwatches, or household appliances commonly found in college dormitories (microwaves, fans, etc) [6]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida Facilities Services current recycling guide requires special handling of batteries by Environmental Health & Safety that provides an added burden to students attempting to properly dispose of them [7]; and,

WHEREAS, the closest location to properly dispose of the previously mentioned e-waste off-campus is the Alachua County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center which is seven miles away from the University of Florida campus [8] and only realistically accessible via a car [9]; and,

WHEREAS, short-term battery recycling drives fail to address the ongoing need for a permanent on-campus battery recycling location to allow students to dispose of used batteries at any point in time [2]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida's on-campus battery recycling options are deficient resulting in improperly-disposed environmentally toxic battery materials leaking into the University's soil [10]; and,

WHEREAS, peer institutions such as Florida International University currently implement on-campus electronic waste/battery recycling disposal containers in on-campus residence halls [11]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida's Six Core Values include Stewardship aimed at "[leaving] a just and habitable world for those who come after us" [12]; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the importance of sustainability and access to proper waste disposal services; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the need for a comprehensive on-campus e-waste & battery disposal system to be put in place; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes University of Florida Surplus team has made efforts for sustainability but they could be further improved; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate calls for the addition of an e-waste collection location that accepts all forms of e-waste in the Reitz Union at the UF Bookstore; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the University of Florida Student Senate calls for the implementation of similar e-waste collection locations at other convenient on-campus locations such as Residence Halls and the Reitz Union; and

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED THAT the University of Florida Student Senate calls for collaboration between the UF Housing Department, UF Surplus, Facilities Services, and Environmental Health & Safety to implement the aforementioned battery recycling system.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to Dwayne Isaacs Reitz Union Ex-Officio, UF Surplus Manager of Operations Michael Stringer, UF Surplus Manager of Assets David Dykes,

UF Surplus Manager of Assets Christopher Hein, UF Surplus Manager of Assets Zuleika "Zuly" Winanse, Sustainability Program Coordinator Kaylee August, Sustainability Coordinator Corey Farmer, Senior Program Director for the Office of Sustainability Liz Storn, Director of Sustainability Mathew Williams, Assistant Vice President of UF Facilities Services Mark Helms, Student Campus Housing Committee Chair James Tyger, Inter-Residence Hall Association President Kara Sammetinger, Senior Director of UF Housing Tina Kuhlengel Horvath, UF EH&S Director Shailendra Singh, Associate Professor Katerina Aifantis, and Senator Max Banach.

[1] https://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/programs/geh/geh_newsletter/2021/8/geh-at-niehs/who_report_explores_the_effects_of_ewaste_on_childrens_health.cfm

[2] <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/education/article282788898.html>

[3] <https://blog.idrenvironmental.com/why-it-s-important-to-dispose-of-e-waste-properly>

[4] <https://www.facilitieservices.ufl.edu/departments/finance/recycling/>

[5] <https://www.facilitieservices.ufl.edu/departments/finance/recycling/recycling-guide/batteries/>

[6] <https://www.fa.ufl.edu/directives/electronic-media-disposal/>

[7] <https://www.facilitieservices.ufl.edu/departments/finance/recycling/recycling-guide/>

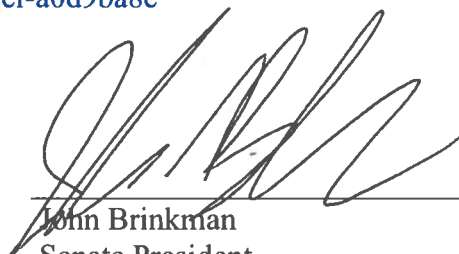
[8] <https://www.alachuacounty.us/depts/solidwaste/hwc/pages/hazardouswastecollection.aspx>

[9] <https://www.google.com/maps/dir/Located:+5125+NE+63rd+Ave.+Gainesville+FL,+32609/University+of+Florida/@29.6796763,82.3494683,13z/data=!3m1!4m1!4m1!4m1!4m1!5!1s0x88e8a65222854a29:0x76a58d805fc97c41!2m2!1d82.2632114!2d29.7118032!1m5!1m1!1s0x88e8a30cfbe49275:0x206fe0de143d9886!2m2!1d-82.3533266!2d29.6465428?entry=ttu>

[10] <https://www.facilitieservices.ufl.edu/departments/finance/recycling/recycling-guide/batteries/>

[11] https://ehs.fiu.edu/_assets/docs/environmental-compliance/assorted-wastes.pdf

[12] <https://www.ufl.edu/about/core-values/#el-a0d9ba8e>



John Brinkman
Senate President

3/1/2024
Date