



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
GREAT LAKES NATIONAL PROGRAM OFFICE
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590**

March 4, 2008

Dear Great Lakes Colleague:

I am pleased to invite you to join us in the *Great Lakes 2008 Earth Day Challenge*. The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency is striving to mobilize hundreds of thousands of citizens in the Great Lakes basin to connect with their environment this April by helping address the environmental impact of electronic wastes and unwanted medicines. The Challenge is meant to galvanize public participation in collection events for those wastes so that together we can safely recycle one million pounds of electronic waste and dispose of one million pills of unwanted medicines responsibly.

I am asking you to become a partner with us in spreading the news about planned collection events during Earth Week and in creating new ones. We need your help both in identifying events to be a part of the Challenge and in getting the word out to the public about these events. If your organization wishes to partner with us, please fill out the web-based partners form you can find at our Earth Day Challenge Web Site: www.epa.gov/greatlakes/earthday2008.

Our partner, Earth 911, is developing an online clearinghouse that will list collection events in the basin to be held April 19-27, 2008, to show people where they can participate near their homes. If your organization is planning a collection event, we invite you to list it by filling out the registration form that can be accessed from the Challenge Web Site.

In addition, if your organization does not have a collection event planned, but would like to do so, we can provide technical assistance and information to help you set up your event. There will also be an opportunity for Challenge partners to share the results of these collection events to gauge whether the Challenge goal as a whole has been met.

If you have any questions, please call our toll-free Earth Day Challenge Hotline at 866-575-8543.

I sincerely hope you can join us in this exciting project. Let's show that together, we can make a difference for the Great Lakes!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary A. Gade".

Mary A. Gade
Great Lakes National Program Manager

Enclosure



Great Lakes 2008 Earth Day Challenge

1 million pounds of e-waste / 1 million unwanted pills

The Great Lakes 2008 Earth Day Challenge

“Collect 1 Million Pounds of e-Waste and 1 Million Unwanted Pills”

For Earth Day 2008, The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency challenges residents and communities around the Great Lakes to collect and recycle electronic waste and to properly dispose of unwanted medicines

E-Waste

Electronic waste includes all those old or broken TVs, cell phones, computer components and similar gadgets that are part of our lives. E-waste contains possibly hazardous materials that can harm human health and the Great Lakes environment if disposed of improperly. In 2005 we discarded an estimated 2 million tons of TVs, computers and other electronic gear. Proper disposal and recycling are necessary to avoid unwanted pollution. When we reuse or recycle e-waste properly, we recover materials for re-use, save energy and reduce the environmental costs of raw material extraction and processing.

Medicines

Traces of medicines have been found in streams and the Great Lakes where we get our drinking water and have also been detected near wastewater treatment outflows. Some of these medicines can lead to reproductive and developmental problems in fish and other animals. We often treat leftover medicine as a common household waste. More than half of people surveyed throw their unused medicines in the trash while a third flush them down the drain. In both cases, the medicines have the potential to be released into our rivers and lakes.

The Challenge

EPA issues this Earth Day Challenge to residents, businesses and community organizations throughout the Great Lakes basin to plan or participate in collection events of e-waste or unwanted medicines during Earth Week April 19 – 27. Across the Great Lakes region, communities are stepping up, signing on to the challenge and adding their collection and take-back events to the efforts of thousands. This is a chance to see how much we can accomplish together. The Challenge is to collect a million pounds of e-waste for proper management and a million pills of unwanted medicines for responsible disposal during Earth Week.

How Can You Participate?

To find out more or learn how to register a collection event, visit our Web site:

www.epa.gov/greatlakes/earthday2008