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Cell Phone Recycling is an Easy Call

Washington, D.C. - Jan. 8, 2008 -- The nation's leading cell phone makers, service providers, and retailers have teamed up with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to answer America's call for easy cell phone recycling. As part of EPA's Plug-In to eCycling program, partners supporting the cell phone recycling campaign include AT&T Wireless, Best Buy, LG Electronics, Motorola, 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 help protect the environment," said Susan Bodine, assistant administrator for EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response. "By dropping it off at a store or sending it through the mail, Americans have more recycling options today than ever before."

To kick-off the campaign, EPA released today a series of print public service announcements, "Recycle Your Cell Phone. It's An Easy Call," which highlight the convenience and environmental and social benefits of recycling a cell phone. EPA also introduced a podcast that addresses many common questions on cell phone recycling.

EPA started the campaign because 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 greenhouse gas emissions, save energy, and conserve natural resources. An estimated 100 to 130 million cell phones are no longer being used, many languishing in storage. If Americans recycled 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 U.S. homes each year.

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Plug-In To eCycling is a voluntary partnership between EPA and electronics manufacturers, retailers, and service providers 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 Inc. 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.

Information about the cell phone recycling campaign: <http://www.epa.gov/cellphones>

Information about the Plug-In to eCycling program: <http://www.epa.gov/plug-in/>