

Electronic Product Stewardship

E-Cycle Washington Successes

E-Cycle Washington is a highly successful product stewardship program for recycling electronics in Washington State. After nine years of operation, the program is still going strong, delivering safe, convenient options for recycling electronics across the state.

As with other product stewardship programs, the cost associated with managing these products at the end of their useful life has been transferred from local governments to the manufacturers and users of the products.

This Is What a Successful Product Stewardship Program Looks Like

Efficient Collection and Recycling: Since E-Cycle Washington began operating in 2009, over 385 million pounds of electronics have been collected for recycling in Washington State. There are currently over 300 collection sites. Over 200 of these are operated by non-profit organizations, creating local jobs and revenue.

Financial Stability: E-Cycle Washington is financially sound and sustainable. Manufacturers of accepted products are required to finance program operations. Manufacturer fee amounts are based on how much they sell into Washington. The current, estimated cost of recycling is \$0.29/lb.

Preventing Wasted Resources: Some used computers and electronic devices can be repaired and sold as used equipment. It's estimated that in 2017, over 439,000 computers, TVs, and monitors dropped off at E-Cycle collection sites were able to be reused. Others can be disassembled into recyclable commodities including glass, plastic, metals and even precious metals such as gold and silver. These components can be used to manufacture new consumer products.

Greenhouse Gas Reduction: The impact of recycling 363 million pounds of electronics is estimated to be equivalent to pulling 96,000 cars off the road or conserving 50,000 gallons of gasoline.

Reduction of Lead: The E-Cycle Washington program has kept over 26 million pounds of lead out of the environment through responsible recycling since its inception.

Education and Outreach: E-Cycle performs outreach functions across the state, including radio ads and billboards. Retailers of electronics are required to provide information on the E-Cycle program and how consumers can find a convenient collection location.



Additional Layers of Oversight: The electronics processors/recyclers are required to meet the *Preferred Performance Standards* for recycling electronic equipment. These standards provide an additional layer of oversight beyond what is required by existing state and federal law for recycling electronics. For example, E-Cycle Washington processors:

- are required to **annually submit** an independent 3rd party audit to show that the standards are being met;
- must use downstream vendors that conform with all of the performance standards for *materials of concern*, i.e. any devices containing mercury or polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), batteries, cathode ray tubes (CRTs), leaded glass, and whole circuit boards;
- that export *materials of concern* must ensure that each transit and recipient country legally accepts such imports.

What's Next?!

Electronic products change quickly and so do recycling services. While the E-Cycle Washington program is healthy and functioning, there is always room for improvement. We suggest the following:

- Create a statewide advisory committee on electronics recycling to advise on markets, services and program policies;
- Explore the use of radio frequency tracking devices to ensure that materials of concern are not exported illegally;
- Add more types of electronic products to the program such as printers, fax/copy/scanning devices, VCRs and DVD players. These products are handled by recyclers outside of the E-Cycle Washington system and there is no documentation required for the handling of materials of concern.

E-Cycle Washington Basics

- Accepted products include laptop and desktop computers, tablets, monitors, televisions, e-readers and portable DVD players.
- Electronics can be dropped off for recycling at over 300 collection sites at no charge.
- The program can be used by individuals, small businesses (under 50 employees), schools, and small city and county governments.

