

How much e-waste is collected under state-mandated recycling programs?

States with strong laws see high takeback volumes

Nineteen states have passed e-waste recycling laws, but we only have data from a few so far. All states except California require the manufacturers to pay for collection and recycling of e-waste. States with “drivers” (MN, WA, OR) such as convenience standards or collection goals are seeing much higher collection rates in their first year than states without such drivers (Texas, Virginia). Only some states report breakdowns by product type.

State		Year	Monitors	TVs	Computers	Laptops	TOTAL LBS COLLECTED	Notes	Population ¹	Lbs per capita ²
California	Year 1	2005			not covered		64,809,498		35,795,255	1.81
	Year 2	2006			not covered		127,979,144		35,979,208	3.58
	Year 3	2007			not covered		185,190,929		36,226,122	5.17
	Year 4	2008			not covered		216,062,581		36,580,371	5.91
	Year 5	2009			not covered		Data Not yet available		36,961,664	
Maine	Year 1	2006	1,205,726	2,954,848	not covered	Laptops numbers under monitors	4,160,574		1,317,308	3.16
	Year 2	2007	1,393,775	3,290,682	not covered		4,688,552		1,314,963	3.57
	Year 3	2008	1,421,284	3,853,020	not covered		5,274,304		1,319,691	4.00
	Year 4 partial	2009 Jan-June	1,072,718	2,953,552	not covered		4,026,270	Actual	1,318,301	6.11
	Year 4 Est.	Projected Total	2,145,436	5,907,104	not covered		8,052,540	Projected annual		
Minnesota	Year 1	2007 - 2008	No breakdown. MN program also collects printers, keyboards; fax machines; and DVD players				33,600,000		5,191,206	6.47
	Year 2	2008 - 2009	No breakdown. MN program also collects printers, keyboards; fax machines; and DVD players				30,293,194		5,230,567	5.84
Oklahoma Dell model bill	Year 1	2009	Reports due to State in March 2010							
Oregon	Year 1 partial	2009 9 mos	4,518,800	8,122,400	1,658,800	Reported under computers	14,300,000	Jan - Sep 09	3,825,657	4.98
		%	31.6%	56.8%	11.6%		19,066,667	Annualized		
Texas Dell model bill	Year 1	09/08 - 12/2009		not covered			12,400,000		24,782,302	0.50
Virginia Dell model bill	Year 1 partial	2009 - 2010		not covered			3,782,500	Actual 2Qs	7,882,590	0.96
							7,565,000	Annualized	(6 mos x 2)	
Washington	Year 1	2009	12,287,734	22,350,612	3,910,328	Reported under computers	38,548,674	Actual	6,664,195	5.78
		%	31.9%	58.0%	10.1%					
West Virginia	Year 1	2009-10	No data							

Trends and questions

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1. What's the "BEST" model for legislation?

We are getting data from only a handful of state programs, and some are still in the start-up phase. So it's too early to draw firm conclusions about which models are the most effective at this point. However, we can see that states passing the Dell model bill (TX, VA) are seeing lower results than others, collecting less than a pound per person.

2. What drives high collection numbers?

Some state laws include "drivers" that result in high levels of collection even in the first year:

- Collection goals: In MN, the law set a collection goal for manufacturers, tied to the amount they are selling into the state.
- Convenience requirements: WA and OR used a different driver – a convenience requirement. They don't say how much manufacturers must collect (although OR has a minimum goal) but they describe how convenient collection must be (at least one site for every county and every city of 10,000 people or more).
- All three of these states with "drivers" in their laws saw high levels of collection in year 1 – between about 5 and 6 lbs per person.

3. Comparing states.

To make fair comparisons, it's important to know that these programs are not all accepting the same products, and some collect from more than just households.

For instance, the California program accepts e-waste from all entities – business, consumers, etc. CA experts estimate that at least half the volume there comes from business. So those numbers should be expected to be higher than states that are only collecting from residents. Maine, MN, OK, TX, VA, and WV accept from consumers only. WA accepts from consumers, charities, small businesses, schools and small governments, but not large businesses. OR accepts from consumers, small businesses, small non-profits and anyone dropping off 7 items or less to collection points.

4. Dell model bill shows lowest results.

Several states have passed a bill developed by Dell. It simply requires the manufacturers to have a program of some kind, with no goals or convenience requirements. This model also doesn't cover televisions. So the results so far show volumes lower than all other states. But even if you compare the Dell bill states' results with the amount of computer equipment collected in other states, we find that the Dell states still collect lower volumes.

	Lbs of Computers & Monitors Collected Year 1	Population	Pounds per person
WA (all sources)	16,198,802	6,664,195	2.43
WA (just households)	15,130,640	6,664,195	2.27
OR	8,236,800	3,825,657	2.15
VA	7,565,000	7,882,590	0.96
TX	12,400,000	24,782,302	0.50

For more information on state laws: http://www.electronicstakeback.com/legislation/state_legislation.htm

¹ Population stats from US Census annual July estimates: <http://www.census.gov/popest/states/NST-ann-est.html>

² Pounds per capita (pounds per person in the state) is used to compare collection volumes between states with different populations.