



# U.S. General Services Administration

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Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
Recycling Electronics: A Common Sense Solution for Enhancing  
Government Efficiency and Protecting Our Environment  
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Good morning Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Coburn, and Members of the Committee. My name is Kevin Kampschroer, and I am the Deputy Senior Sustainability Official at the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). Thank you for inviting me to testify about electronics recycling and the opportunities this area provides for increased environmental stewardship by the Federal government.

E-waste is the largest growing waste stream in the country. According to the most recent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates, more than five million tons of electronics were in storage.<sup>1</sup> Of those, 2.37 million tons were ready for end-of-life management, yet only twenty-five percent were collected for recycling.<sup>2</sup>

The Administration is committed to reducing e-waste and realizing efficiency by standardizing procedures across the government. As the world's largest consumer of electronics, e-waste is a significant opportunity for the Federal government. In 2009, the President issued Executive Order 13514 which, among other things, called for the Federal community to promote electronics stewardship. The Administration also established an Interagency Task Force on Electronics Stewardship (the Task Force) led by GSA, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The President charged the Task Force with developing a National Strategy for Electronics Stewardship (the Strategy), which the Task Force released in 2011.

Today, I look forward to discussing the development of the Strategy, its important tenets, and GSA's efforts as a member of the Task Force to help enact those provisions to address this critical challenge.

### *The Strategy —*

GSA has always had programs for the disposal of excess equipment, including electronics, but these programs were not designed with the specific challenges of e-waste in mind. Before the Strategy, there was no standardized government-wide plan to properly evaluate or dispose of electronics that could no longer be used as originally intended.

To help develop the Strategy, the Task Force, made up of sixteen agencies,<sup>3</sup> including GSA, EPA and CEQ, hosted several listening sessions with industry stakeholders (electronics manufacturers and recyclers), the non-governmental organization community, State and local governments and customer agencies. In addition, the Task Force solicited public comments through the Federal Register and Regulations.gov. The Strategy was released on July 20, 2011.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.epa.gov/osw/consERVE/materials/eycling/manage.htm>. Estimates are from 2009. *Id.*

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> For a full list of Task Force members, visit:

<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/consERVE/materials/eycling/taskforce/faq.htm>.

The Strategy details the Federal government's plan to enhance the management of electronics throughout the products' lifecycle — from design to eventual reuse or recycling.

The Strategy set forth several items to be addressed over the coming years: development and publication of proper government-wide policy and guidance on the reuse and disposal of electronics including the use of certified recyclers for proper management of used electronics, acquisition of more sustainable electronics that can be easily reused and are designed to have a minimal end-of-life environmental impact, and transparency of newly-collected data regarding Federal government procurement, reuse, and disposal of electronics.<sup>4</sup>

### *Reuse and Disposal of Electronics —*

On February 29, 2012, GSA published Bulletin B-34 in the Federal Management Regulations, presenting a specific list of options to consider when excess electronics are identified. Excess electronics should first either be offered to other Federal agencies for reuse through GSAXcess, or transferred to schools and other educational organizations. In FY 2013, \$32 million worth of equipment was transferred among agencies through GSAXcess and in the first quarter of FY 2014, \$2.6 million worth of equipment was transferred.<sup>5</sup>

Through GSA's Computers for Learning Program, agencies may transfer excess computers and related peripheral equipment to schools and educational nonprofit organizations.<sup>6</sup> In FY 2013, \$72 million worth of equipment was donated through this program and in the first quarter of FY 2014, \$12.7 million worth of equipment was donated.<sup>7</sup> Approximately thirty agencies participate in GSA's Computers for Learning Program each year.

Electronics not transferred through GSAXcess or donated to schools are declared surplus and are eligible to be donated through GSA's Federal Surplus Personal Property Donation Program to State and local governments and nonprofit organizations. In FY 2013, \$4.6 million worth of equipment was donated through this program and in the first quarter of FY 2014, \$513,000 worth of equipment was donated.<sup>8</sup>

Additionally, if electronics are not transferred or donated, the agency may sell, or, if a take-back provision exists,<sup>9</sup> return the electronics to the original vendor. GSA is incorporating these

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<sup>4</sup> The Strategy lists four goals: (1) Build Incentives for Design of Greener Electronics, and Enhance Science, Research and Technology Development in the United States; (2) Ensure that the Federal Government Leads By Example; (3) Increase Safe and Effective Management and Handling of Used Electronics in the United States; and (4) Reduce Harm from US Exports of E-Waste and Improve Safe Handling of Used Electronics in Developing Countries.

<sup>5</sup> GSAXcess. Valuations are based on original acquisition value.

<sup>6</sup> Under E.O. 12999, agencies may also transfer computers and related equipment directly to schools.

<sup>7</sup> GSAXcess.

<sup>8</sup> GSAXcess.

<sup>9</sup> GSA is incorporating some of these provisions in our contracts, such as in the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative (FSSI) Print Management Program

provisions into many of our contracts, and is also developing government-wide guidance about incorporating take-back requirements into all contracts.

Under GSA's policy, Bulletin B-34, non-functional electronics should ultimately be directed to a third-party certified electronics recycler and should not be sent to landfills or incinerators. Furthermore, all electronics recyclers listed on GSA's Schedules must be third-party certified.<sup>10</sup>

#### *Acquisition of More Sustainable Electronics —*

Another goal of the Strategy is to promote the purchase of green electronics to reduce their life cycle environmental impact. GSA continues to improve our contract vehicles in order to simplify Federal agencies' acquisition of green electronics.

Currently, there are over 120,000 Energy Star products offered across several GSA Schedules.<sup>11</sup> Focusing on Information Technology products, GSA is currently revising Schedule 70 (IT Equipment) to encourage vendors to provide Energy Star and EPEAT-registered electronics. Additionally, used and refurbished electronics are already offered on Schedule 70 — \$50 million worth of used and refurbished electronics were sold in FYs 2010-2013 and \$2.5 million were sold in the first quarter of FY 2014.<sup>12</sup>

Within the GSA *Advantage* online shopping portal, environmental icons (such as Energy Star) are used to show the various attributes of listed products. Additionally, GSA has developed an easy to use, web-based, Green Procurement Compilation tool which consolidates and displays products designated for Federal procurement by the EPA and the Departments of Energy and Agriculture as more sustainable. Each item's listing includes the item's environmental certifications, where to buy the product and how to find vendors through GSA's offerings.

In addition to the GSA Schedules, the National IT Commodities Program and the FSSI Print Management Program also offer Energy Star and EPEAT-registered electronics. Both solutions require vendors to report their sales of Energy Star and EPEAT-registered electronics. This reporting assists our customer agencies track their purchases of sustainable electronics.

With GSA's internal acquisitions, we are committed to meeting the goals outlined in the Strategy. In FY 2013, we purchased \$4.3 million worth of Energy Star and EPEAT-registered products from various GSA procurement vehicles.

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<sup>10</sup> Schedule 899 (Environmental Services).

<sup>11</sup> GSA *Advantage*. Energy Star products include: Copiers on Schedule 36 (Office, Imaging, and Document Solutions); Appliances on Schedule 51V (Hardware Superstore); Audio/Visual equipment on Schedule 58I (Professional Audio/Video Telemetry/Tracking; Recording/Reproducing and Signal Data Solutions); Camera battery chargers on Schedule 67 (Photographic Equipment); and Refrigeration equipment on Schedule 73 (Food Service, Hospitality, Cleaning Equipment and Supplies, Chemicals and Services).

<sup>12</sup> Schedule 70.

Additionally, we have been deploying Energy Star servers and workstations at GSA since 2001. Servers and personal computers have been EPEAT-compliant since 2005 and EPEAT Gold since 2009, meaning that the equipment is built with reduced amounts of lead, mercury and other sensitive materials, incorporates recycled materials, and is manufactured in ways that simplify disassembly and reuse.

#### *Transparency —*

Transparency is a crucial part of the Strategy and one of the most challenging aspects of the plan. Currently, although many e-waste recycling programs exist, there are no guidelines to measure their use government-wide. GSA, working with other Federal agencies, is considering a policy that will include a requirement for agencies to submit data for all disposed electronics. This data, which could be publicly available on Data.gov, would provide greater transparency into Federal agencies' performance against the goals of the Strategy.

#### *Conclusion —*

The Federal government, as the largest purchaser of information technology in the world, has a unique responsibility to be a leader in the management and disposal of electronics. GSA plays an important role in helping agencies meet the goals set forth in the National Strategy for Electronics Stewardship, through policy guidance and responsible acquisition, donation and disposal of electronics. We have a lot more work ahead of us and hope to continue to make progress on this important issue.

I am pleased to be here today, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.