



## **ERCC Workshop: Harmonizing State Programs**

**September 28, 2010**

### **State Program Element: Brand Return Share and Returns Data**

#### **Issue Overview**

The need for brand return share or brand count (returns) data is included in several state laws as a method to apportion all or part of the costs to manufacturers. Under this method, manufacturers pay for the volume of their brand/s of returned covered electronics. This apportionment can be accomplished in two ways. The first can be called *returns* or *brand count*, where every covered device (of affected product categories) is weighed and the brand is recorded. Under the second method, called *return share sampling*, ongoing brand recording is not required. Rather, random or scheduled sampling events are done throughout the year and each manufacturer's return share percentage is calculated after the necessary total number of units total has been achieved.

#### **Products Impacted**

Desktop computers, laptop computers, computer monitors, printers, televisions (WA and OR only)

#### **States Impacted**

CT (IT only), IL (IT only), ME (IT only), NJ (IT Only), RI (IT only), OR (all covered), WA (all covered)

#### **Challenges**

- Tracking and updating lists of current and former manufacturers
- Unlabeled or damaged equipment must be put into orphan "pile"
- Historic brands in the waste stream – designating orphans if a current successor in interest cannot be found
- Brand recording errors – manual/human recording of brands labeled on a device inevitably leads to mistakes (e.g., bar codes not included on all returned device to automate this process)
- Inconsistent data various return share studies based on level rigor in sampling events

- Few ongoing sources of return share data (Maine has limited product scope, Washington releases mainly total weight percentages not broken down by category)
- Sampling requires comprehensive process to ensure statistical validity
- Brand counting and sampling can be disruptive to recycler receiving and processing flow

#### **Possible Solutions**

- Results from jointly sponsored sampling events across the country consolidated into a centralized return share database - by product category (and covered entity, if possible)
- Self-reporting by recyclers to a centralized database of ongoing brand counts using a set of standard definitions and practices. Tied to possible random brand recording process audits.