



# NEW YORK STATE AND EPEAT: CASE STUDY

## Highlights

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- IT products purchased by New York State are competitive, effective and ultimately save millions of dollars
- Use of EPEAT, a New York State Executive Order and centralized contracts enables the state's success in identifying and purchasing responsibly made, sustainable IT products
- Environmental priorities identified by New York State are addressed through selection of products that meet specific EPEAT criteria
- Diligent tracking of EPEAT-registered product purchases has resulted in quantifiable environmental benefits and public recognition

## Introduction

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Users of OGS centralized contracts purchase upwards of 200,000 computers and displays each year. These electronics are essential in providing services to the state's 19.8 million residents. However, for all the efficiencies and benefits created through IT, these electronics also carry significant impact on human and environmental health globally. Since 2008, New York State (NYS) has been working to reduce these impacts through the procurement of EPEAT-registered IT products. EPEAT is the definitive, comprehensive global ecolabel for sustainable electronics.

## Overview: Benefits of Purchasing Sustainable IT Products with EPEAT

**Environmental and Human Health Benefits:** Vast reduction in energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, hazardous and solid waste, increased use of recycled plastics, recycled content packaging, and reusable packaging.

**Financial Benefits:** Through an aggregate buy program for computers offered by the New York State Office of General Services (OGS), users of OGS centralized contracts are able to achieve substantial environmental benefits as well as cost savings. On average, purchasers save approximately 45% off of the state contract pricing, realize additional cost savings through reduced energy consumption, and see other environmental benefits including reductions in hazardous waste, solid waste, and greenhouse gases.

## EPEAT Adoption

*Successful implementation of EPEAT was the result of top-down support, pragmatic procurement practices, and positive recognition.*

### Leadership

New York State established an ambitious Green Procurement and Agency Sustainability Program through Executive Order (EO 4), which directs state agencies and authorities to consider a broad range of environmental and health criteria when making purchasing decisions. EO 4 establishes an institutional framework – co-led by the Office of General Services (OGS) and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) – to guide the state’s sustainable purchasing prioritization, standard-setting and reporting activities. This interagency collaboration has created dozens of “green” specifications, which serve as a valuable resource for purchasers developing contracts for commodities, services, and technology. The clear direction and committee framework created by EO 4 facilitated communication and engagement across all key NYS stakeholders. Input from a variety

***“New York State’s decision to purchase EPEAT-registered products in the 2014-2015 aggregate buy will result in an estimated \$8.7 million in savings”***

of purchasing stakeholders - including leadership, sustainability professionals, and procurement personnel - allowed for meaningful and focused communication, research, and ultimately the purchase of the best environmentally preferable IT options on the market.

Efforts to identify and purchase responsibly made and environmentally preferable IT products began in the EO 4 procurement subcommittee. The subcommittee developed a specification for Desktop and Laptop Computers with a goal of purchasing IT products that aligned with NYS environmental priorities and that support procurement’s primary goals of purchasing competitive, effective, and reasonably priced products for NYS employees. EPEAT has helped NYS address each of these considerations and make informed choices that procurement staff and end-users support. Ultimately, NYS OGS was able to procure products that were environmentally preferable, highly prevalent in the marketplace, and would ultimately save NYS millions of dollars.

## Cost Considerations

Though cost factors can often be a concern when purchasing sustainable products, cost analysis supported NYS’ decision to purchase EPEAT-registered products. For example, NYS’s decision to purchase EPEAT-registered products purchased in the 2014-2015 aggregate buy will result in an estimated \$8.7 million in savings over the lifetime of those products as a result of reduced energy consumption. Similarly, criteria that require extended warranties for IT and that allow users to upgrade and repair products mean EPEAT-registered products have longer refresh cycles, yielding both environmental and financial benefits. The EPA’s Electronics Environmental Benefits Calculator<sup>3</sup> was used to quantify and clearly demonstrate the cost savings that resulted.

## Product Availability & Environmental Considerations

EPEAT-registered products are categorized on a tiered rating system that identifies products as either bronze, silver, or gold. Products on the EPEAT Registry can be compliant with as many as 50 lifecycle criteria that are identified as either required or optional. Each rating tier represents greater leadership than the last. Products that meet all of the required criteria earn a bronze rating and can achieve silver and then gold if more optional criteria are met. This system allows NYS to balance the level of environmental leadership it wishes to achieve against its desire to ensure a healthy availability of products in the competitive contracting process. When NYS first conducted an analysis of its environmental considerations, and weighed its needs against product availability, it settled upon a requirement that all desktop and laptop computer products meet EPEAT Silver, at a minimum. Later, when it became clear that product availability was not an issue, NYS upgraded its purchasing requirement

***“NYS upgraded its purchasing requirement to EPEAT Gold to maximize its environmental leadership”***

to EPEAT Gold to maximize its environmental leadership. The EPEAT specifications allowed NYS to select optional environmental criteria that most aligned with its environmental priorities. Specifically, NYS’s aggregate buy requires that desktops, notebooks, and tablets meet or exceed all of the following EPEAT criteria for standard configuration and standard option form factors:

- 4.1.2.1 Elimination of intentionally added cadmium
- 4.1.5.1 Elimination of intentionally added hexavalent chromium
- 4.1.6.2 Large plastic parts free of certain flame retardants classified under European Council Directive 67/548/EEC
- 4.1.7.1 Batteries free of lead, cadmium and mercury (not applicable for Monitors)
- 4.1.8.1 Large plastic parts free of PVC
- 4.8.2.2 Packaging 90% recyclable and plastics labeled

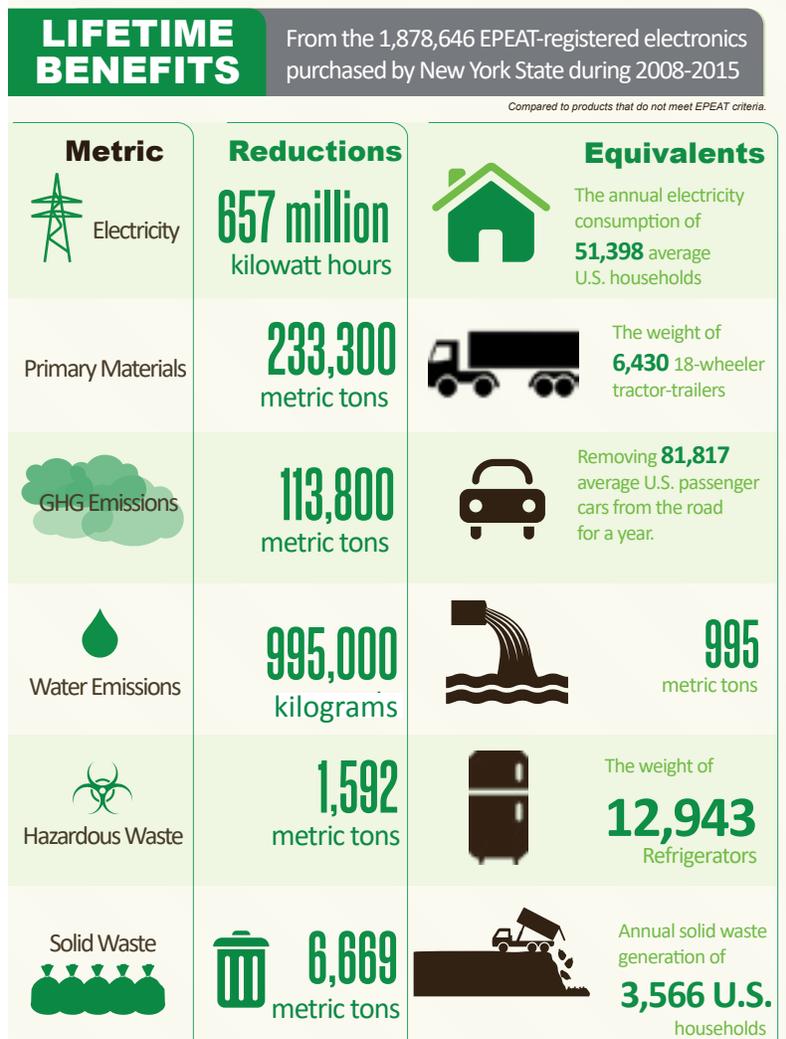
## Results

### Tracking spend on EPEAT-registered products resulted in public recognition; continued programmatic momentum

NYS has included EPEAT in its IT product specifications since 2008 resulting in substantial benefit for its residents and its community. Part of the program’s long-term success is based upon the state’s ability to track progress and receive recognition for its efforts. NYS captures spend against its aggregate contract for IT equipment through periodic spend reports from its vendors. Though tracking spend in any context is a challenge that requires contracting staff to carefully monitor vendors the effort is enormously important to the continued success of the program.

Using annual spend data, NYS has been able to identify the number of EPEAT-registered IT products purchased annually. This data is included in NYS’s annual EO 4 reports. Additionally, quantifiable environmental benefits and cost savings are generated using the EPA’s Electronics Environmental Benefits Calculator. The ability to convert environmentally-focused purchasing considerations into a quantifiable and easily understandable ecolabel helps to inspire continued enthusiasm and buy-in for the use of EPEAT. At the same time, these benefits and savings serve as a success story for the broader EO 4 initiative.

The table on the following page shows the environmental impact reductions over the product’s lifetime for purchases made through the completed aggregate buys, which covers the period from 2008 through 2015.



## Next Steps

The New York State Office of General Services continues to evaluate its procurement contracts for opportunities to expand, and hopes to add additional product categories covered by the EPEAT specifications in future procurements.

### For more information contact:

**Andrea Desimone**  
Purchaser Relations Manager  
Green Electronics Council,  
ADesimone@greenelectronicscouncil.org

**Todd Gardner**  
Contract Management Specialist 3, New York State  
Office of General Services  
Todd.Gardner@ogs.ny.gov

**Jonathan Rifkin**  
Director of Strategic Partnerships  
Green Electronics Council  
JRifkin@greenelectronicscouncil.org

