



## MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL

Douglas F. Gansler

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### **Attorney General Gansler Announces \$173 Million Settlement for Consumers Harmed by Computer Chip Price-Fixing Conspiracy**

**BALTIMORE, MD ( June 24, 2010)** -Attorney General Douglas F. Gansler today announced that he, along with 32 other state attorneys general, has reached a \$173 million nationwide settlement with six worldwide manufacturers of Dynamic Random Access Memory (DRAM) computer chips. The settlement resolves allegations that the companies, along with Samsung Semiconductor, Inc., devised an elaborate scheme to raise prices on their products. DRAM is a type of computer chip used in all personal computers, servers, workstations and many other electronic devices.

The settlement provides restitution for consumers and state and local government agencies who paid more for computers and other electronic devices because of the price-fixing scheme. Maryland and the other States previously settled with Samsung, the world's largest DRAM manufacturer, for \$90 million. This brings the total recovery settlement for state and local governments and consumers to \$263 million. As a result of the settlement announced today, Maryland State and local governments will receive approximately \$1.2 million. Maryland consumers will also receive funds from the settlement in an amount to be determined by a Special Master appointed by the Court. Under the terms of the settlement, the companies also agree to strong injunctive relief that will require them to refrain from conduct that could substantially lessen competition.

My office is committed to investigating and suing companies that make unlawful agreements resulting in higher prices to Maryland citizens and institutions," said Attorney General Gansler. "Strong enforcement of the antitrust laws is necessary to prevent consumers from being victimized by collusion among companies in a position to dominate the market."

The DRAM manufacturers named in the settlement include American companies Micron Technology, Inc. and NEC Electronics America, Inc. as well as foreign companies Infineon Technologies, Hynix Semiconductor, Elpida Memory, Inc., and Mosel-Vitelic Corp. The States' investigation revealed that from 1998 through 2002, the companies exchanged confidential information and agreed to quote inflated prices on DRAM to customers that included computer manufacturers such as Dell, IBM, and Hewlett-Packard. The computer manufacturers unknowingly passed on the inflated prices to consumers.

In addition to Maryland, states participating in today's settlement include Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

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