



Washington State (/)
Office of the Attorney General
Attorney General Bob Ferguson

(/)

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ATTORNEY GENERAL ANNOUNCES PROCESS FOR WASHINGTONIANS TO RECEIVE SHARE OF CRT PRICE FIXING RECOVERY



(<http://www.atg.wa.gov>)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Nearly \$40M total paid total by the seven companies sued by the Attorney General for price fixing

SEATTLE — Attorney General Bob Ferguson today announced the process for consumers to obtain their share of a nearly \$40 million recovery (<http://www.atg.wa.gov/news/news-releases/samsung-pay-29m-price-fixing-scheme-affecting-millions-washingtonians>). The recovery is a result of the Attorney General's price-fixing lawsuit against seven manufacturers of cathode ray tubes, or CRTs, which is the technology common in televisions and computer monitors prior to the introduction of LCD flat screens.

Hundreds of thousands of Washingtonians are eligible for restitution because they purchased old box-style television and computer monitors during the period of the conspiracy.

Individuals who lived in Washington from 1995 to 2007 and purchased a CRT television or computer monitor were likely harmed by the alleged price-fixing scheme and will receive restitution if they file a valid claim. Businesses headquartered in Washington during the conspiracy period may also be eligible.

To file a claim, visit www.crtsettlement.atg.wa.gov (<http://www.crtsettlement.atg.wa.gov>) to fill out a form, or call 800-332-9084. **All claims must be submitted on or before May 16, 2019.**

The amount consumers and businesses could expect to receive will vary depending on the products purchased and the total number of claims filed. The maximum is \$20 per CRT monitor and \$6 per CRT television. Consumers who purchased multiple CRT monitors and televisions during the conspiracy can receive restitution for each device.

"When powerful interests illegally conspire behind closed doors to drive up the cost of their products, Washingtonians lose out," Ferguson said. "Now, we're helping Washington consumers get their money back. If you lived in Washington and purchased an old box computer monitor or television between 1995 and 2007, please file a claim so you can get restitution for the harm you suffered."

Consumers and businesses do not need to pay a fee to participate in this settlement. Consumers are not required to submit documentation when they file a claim. However, they may be asked to verify their claim, especially for claims involving a significant number of purchases.

Anyone who previously submitted their claims information to the Attorney General's Office does not need to submit it again in order to receive restitution. All claims sent since the recovery was first announced will be forwarded to the claims administrator for processing.

Consumers who do not have a current Washington address will be required to provide the Washington address where they lived at the time they bought the CRT products.

For questions about the claims process, please read these frequently asked questions (https://agportal-s3bucket.s3.amazonaws.com/20180904_CRT_DraftClaimsFAQs.pdf), email info@wactsettlement.com (<mailto:info@wactsettlement.com>), or call 800-332-9084. Claims must be filed by the claimant, and not by a third-party, with payments to go directly to the claimant.

Case background

Ferguson's lawsuit (http://agportal-s3bucket.s3.amazonaws.com/20120501_Complaint_WA_Bkmrkd.pdf) asserted CRT manufacturers, including Samsung, LG, Panasonic, Hitachi, Chunghwa, Toshiba and Philips, engaged in a price-fixing scheme to drive up the cost of CRTs from 1995 to 2007. During those 12 years, the alleged price-fixing conspiracy caused Washington consumers to be overcharged for their CRT televisions and computer monitors. The seven defendant companies are paying Washington a total of \$39.65 million to resolve the claims brought by the Attorney General.

Ferguson's lawsuit asserts the companies held secret meetings, known internally as "glass meetings," in which they agreed to fix prices of CRTs. For example, the lawsuit alleges the companies agreed to artificially restrict supply to keep prices high and share information with competitors regarding capacity, production, prices and customer demands for CRTs.

According to the lawsuit, conspirators split the glass meetings into three tiers: "top meetings" for high-level company executives, "management meetings" for mid-level managers, and "working-level meetings" for lower-level sales and marketing employees.

The lawsuit alleges the companies' scheme allowed them to keep CRT prices high, even as liquid crystal display, or LCD, screens were introduced to the market.

Until the late 2000s, CRTs were the primary technology for television screens and computer monitors. In 1999, CRT monitors accounted for over 90 percent of the retail market for computer monitors in North America. The technology has largely fallen out of use in recent years, as flat-screen televisions and computer monitors made with LCD screens became more popular. The companies no longer produce CRTs.

The total paid by CRT manufacturers amounts to \$39.65 million:

- Samsung, \$29 million
- Philips, \$7 million
- LG, \$1.5 million
- Toshiba, \$1.3 million
- Panasonic, \$450,000
- Hitachi, \$275,000
- Chunghwa, \$125,000

Antitrust Division Chief Jonathan Mark and Assistant Attorneys General Justin Wade, Neal Luna and Eric Newman worked on the case.

The Office of the Attorney General's Antitrust Division is responsible for enforcing the antitrust provisions of Washington's Unfair Business Practices-Consumer Protection Act. The division investigates and litigates complaints of anticompetitive conduct and reviews potentially anticompetitive mergers. The division also brings actions in federal court under the federal antitrust laws. It receives no general fund support, funding its own actions through recoveries made in other cases.

In 2016, in a separate price-fixing lawsuit against many of the same defendants, the division returned \$41 million to Washington consumers in its lawsuit (<https://www.atg.wa.gov/news/news-releases/more-41m-headed-consumers-ag-ferguson-s-lcd-price-fixing-case>) over the LCD price-fixing scheme.

The Antitrust Division investigates complaints about potential anti-competitive activity. For information about filing a complaint, visit <https://fortress.wa.gov/atg/formhandler/ago/AntitrustComplaint.aspx> (<https://fortress.wa.gov/atg/formhandler/ago/AntitrustComplaint.aspx>).

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