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# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Attorney General Frosh Reaches Settlement with Google Over Location Tracking Practices** *Settlement Should Make it Easier for Consumers to Maintain Privacy While Using Google Products*

**BALTIMORE, MD (November 14, 2022)** – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today announced that his Consumer Protection Division along with 39 other attorneys general have reached a \$391.5 million multistate [settlement](#) with Google over its location tracking practices relating to Google Account settings. The settlement - the largest amount paid to state attorneys general in a privacy investigation - also contains injunctive terms that will require Google to make it easier for consumers to manage their privacy settings when using Google products. Maryland's share of the settlement is \$8.6 million.

“Google misled Marylanders about its location tracking practices. It built detailed profiles of users but failed to alert them to the extent of the sensitive, personal location information it collected,” said Attorney General Frosh. “This settlement will give users greater power to protect their privacy.”

Location data is a key part of Google's digital advertising business. Google uses the personal and behavioral data it collects to build detailed user profiles and target ads on behalf of its advertising customers. Location data is among the most sensitive and valuable personal information Google collects. Even a limited amount of location data can expose a person's identity and routines and can be used to infer personal details.

As detailed in the settlement, the attorneys general found that Google violated state consumer protection laws by misleading consumers about its location tracking practices since at least 2014. Specifically, Google caused users to be confused about the scope of the Location History setting, the fact that the Web & App Activity setting existed and also collected location information, and the extent to which consumers who use Google products and services could limit Google's location tracking by adjusting their account and device settings.

The settlement requires Google to be more transparent with consumers about its practices. Google must:

- Show additional information to users whenever they turn a location-related account setting “on” or “off”;
- Make key information about location tracking unavoidable for users (i.e., not hidden); and,
- Give users detailed information about the types of location data Google collects and how it’s used at an enhanced “Location Technologies” webpage.

The settlement also limits Google’s use and storage of certain types of location information and requires Google account controls to be more user-friendly.

In addition to Maryland, the settlement was joined by the attorneys general of Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2022/111422a.pdf>