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Overview of California's Used Mattress Recovery and Recycling Program

L E G I S L A T I V E A N A L Y S T ' S O F F I C E

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Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 3
On Resources and Transportation
Hon. Richard Bloom, Chair





Mattress Recovery and Recycling Program Established in 2013

- The program was established by Chapter 388 of 2013, (SB 254, Hancock) in order to (1) increase the number of mattresses (including box springs, frames, and other components) that are recycled, (2) develop an effective network of mattress collection and recycling locations, and (3) reduce the impact of illegally dumped mattresses on local communities.

- Pursuant to the legislation, mattress producers formed the Mattress Recycling Council (MRC), a nonprofit stewardship organization that created a statewide program to increase recovery and recycling of used mattresses on behalf of manufacturers. The Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) certified MRC as a mattress recycling organization in November 2014. MRC's recycling program is called "Bye Bye Mattress." Mattress manufacturers, retailers, renovators, and recyclers must register with MRC and comply with various reporting and administrative requirements.

- Consumers pay a fee on each new mattress purchased, which provides funding for the program. Fee amounts are established by MRC and approved by CalRecycle. Currently, the fee is \$10.50 per mattress. It was reduced from \$11 on January 1, 2018 because MRC projected a significant surplus.

- The state's main role is enforcement. CalRecycle evaluates compliance through collection of data, audits, and inspections.



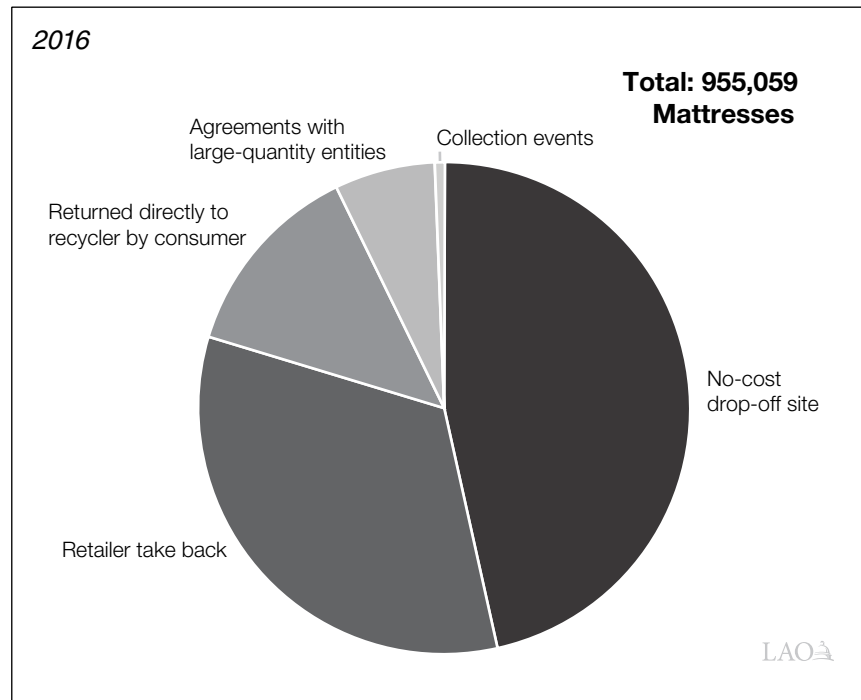
Program Based on Extended Producer Responsibility

- The program is based on the principle of “extended producer responsibility” or “product stewardship,” which refers to a waste management strategy that makes the manufacturer of a product responsible for the end-of-life costs associated with its recycling or disposal. Consequently, manufacturers “internalize” these costs into the price of the product when it is sold.

- Reflecting recycling and disposal costs in a product’s price means that the entities and individuals making and using the product pay for its total lifetime costs. This is different than typical waste management programs, where disposal and cleanup costs are often borne by local governments and taxpayers.

- Because extended producer responsibility programs require manufacturers to bear at least some of the costs of product disposal and recycling, they can incentivize manufacturers to create products that are easier or cheaper to recycle.

Used Mattress Collection



- As shown in the above figure, Bye Bye Mattress collects used mattresses through a variety of methods. Most (80 percent) are returned at free drop-off sites operated by MRC or taken back by retailers (for free) upon purchase of a new mattress. Bye Bye Mattress also provides a financial incentive of \$3 per mattress to consumers to deliver mattresses directly to recyclers and has collection agreements with entities that have large numbers of mattresses (for example, hotels and the military).

- Not included in the figure, the program also compensates entities—such as local governments, solid waste facilities, and other waste collectors—that collect illegally dumped mattresses. During its first year (2016), 40 participants in 29 counties reported collecting 24,000 illegally dumped mattresses.



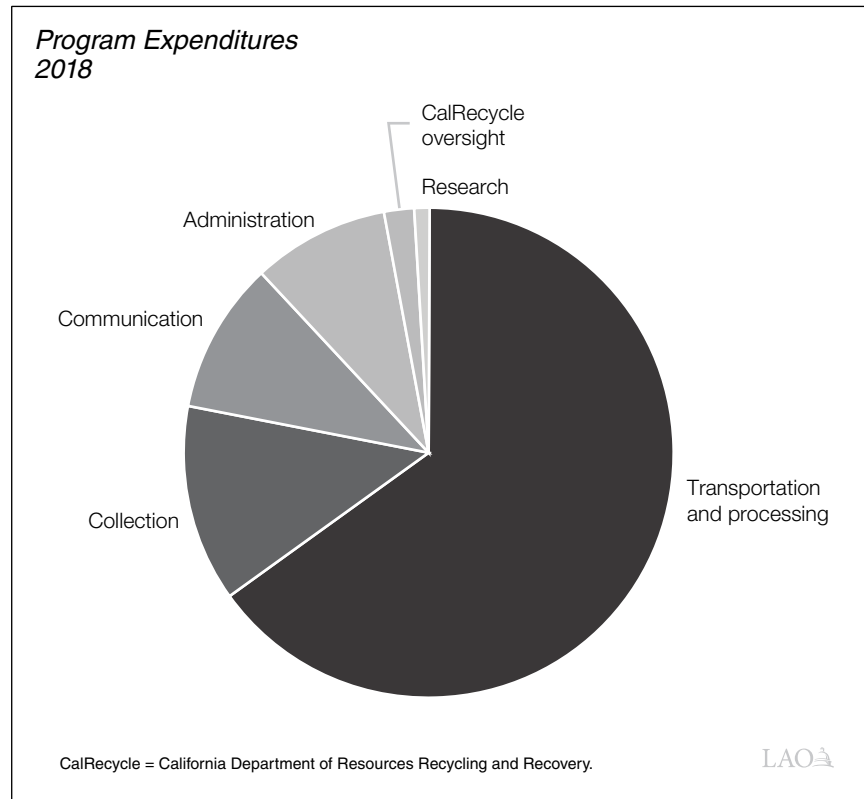
Used Mattress Diversion and Recycling

Recycled Materials From Discarded Mattresses	
<i>2016</i>	
Material	Quantity (lbs)
Steel	15,134,538
Foam	3,609,705
Quilt panels	3,221,813
Wood	3,515,208
Cotton	1,064,389
Other fiber	232,202
Felt	134,388
Plastics	63,314
Cardboard	60,455
Total	27,036,012

- Over 46 million pounds of material was collected under the program in 2016. Of this amount, about three-quarters was recycled or used as waste-to-energy (typically by burning the material and capturing the heat), and about one-quarter was disposed of in landfills.

- Materials recovered from used mattresses can be recycled into many secondary uses, such as new steel products, carpet pads, and insulation. As shown in the figure, more than half of the 27 million pounds of the recycled material collected is steel.

Program Funded by Fee on Mattress Sales



- ☑ MRC projects that fee revenue will be nearly \$40 million in 2018. The organization anticipates spending about \$33 million.
- ☑ More than three-quarters of program expenditures is for the collection, transportation, and processing of used mattresses.