

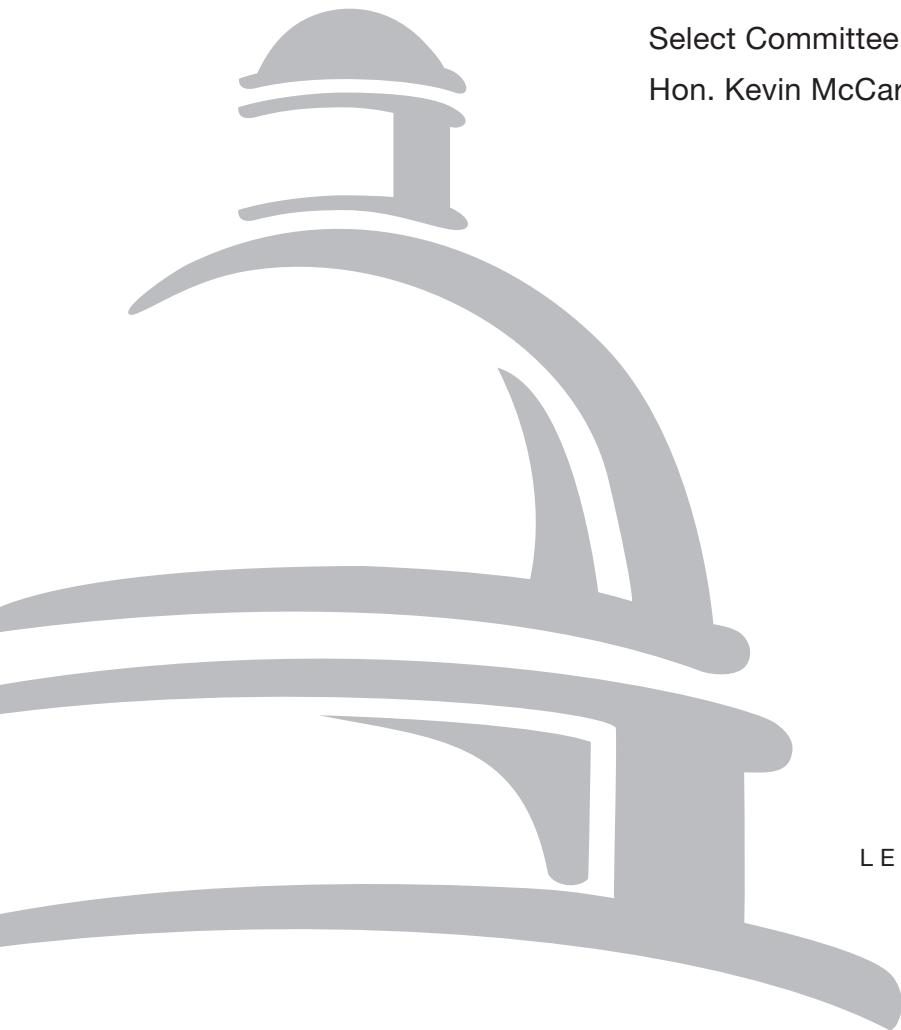
NOVEMBER 16, 2020

Overview of Plastics in California

PRESENTED TO:

Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Hon. Laura Friedman, Chair

Select Committee on Waste Reduction and Recycling
Hon. Kevin McCarty, Chair



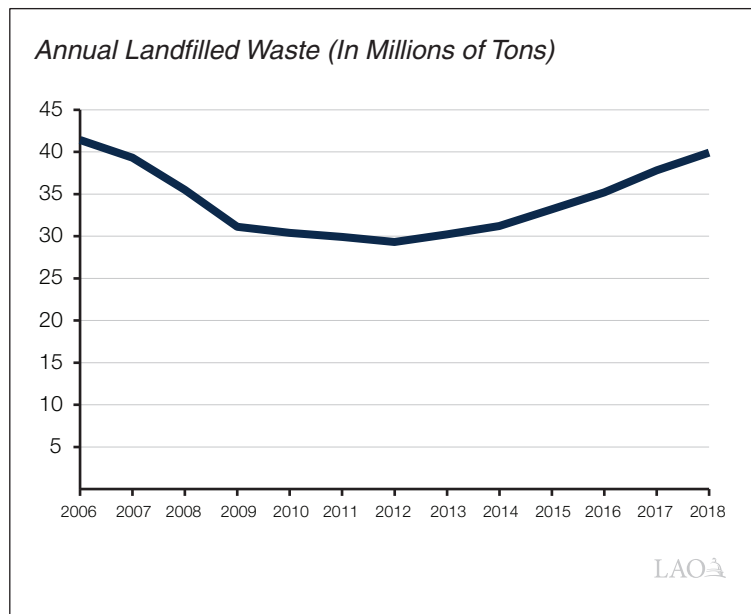
LEGISLATIVE ANALYST'S OFFICE

Major Goals and Recent Policies

- ***Beverage Container Recycling Program (BCRP).*** Chapter 1290 of 1986 (AB 2020, Margolin) establishes a goal of an 80 percent recycling rate for all aluminum, glass, plastic, and bimetal beverage containers sold in California. The BCRP—a self-funded program that incentivizes consumers to recycle certain beverage containers—is the main program used to achieve these recycling goals.
- ***Statewide Recycling Goal.*** Chapter 476 of 2011 (AB 341, Chesbro) establishes a statewide goal of 75 percent source reduction, recycling, and composting by 2020, as well as a Mandatory Commercial Recycling program.
- ***Single-Use Plastic Bag Ban.*** Chapter 850 of 2014 (SB 270, Padilla) and Proposition 67 (2016) establish a statewide single-use carryout bag ban. Most grocery stores, retail stores with a pharmacy, convenience stores, food marts, and liquor stores no longer can provide single-use plastic carryout bags to their customers.
- ***Single-Use Plastic Straw Restrictions.*** Chapter 576 of 2018 (AB 1884, Calderon) prohibits a full-service restaurant from providing single-use plastic straws to consumers unless requested by the consumer.
- ***Food Packaging Requirements in State Facilities.*** Chapter 610 of 2018 (SB 1335, Allen) requires a food service facility located in a state-owned facility or operating on state-owned property to use types of food service packaging that are reusable, recyclable, or compostable.
- ***Mandatory Recycled Content in Plastic Bottles.*** Chapter 115 of 2020 (AB 793, Ting) requires that plastic beverage containers consist of a minimum of 50 percent recycled content by 2030.



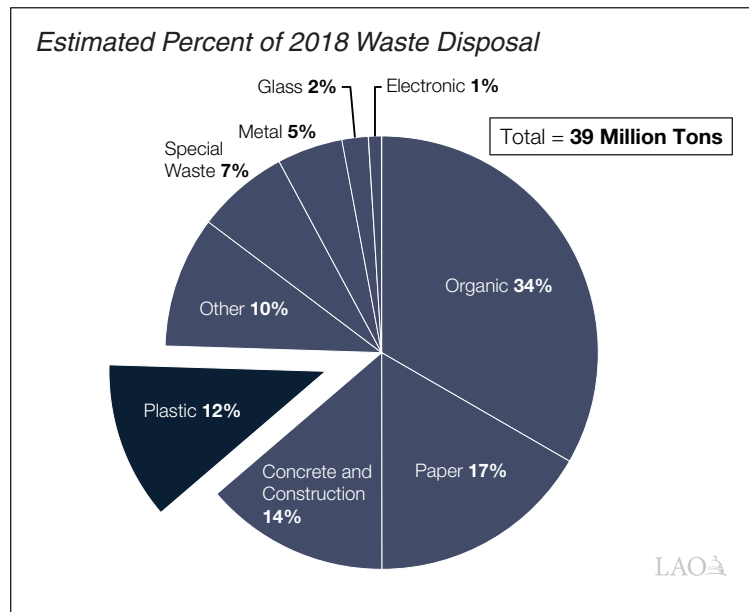
Overall Waste Disposal Increasing



- Potential factors leading to the overall increase in disposal include improving economic conditions that result in increased waste generation, changing packaging and consumer behavior related to E-commerce, and diminished export markets for recyclable materials.
- Estimated recycling rate—including source reduction, recycling, and composting—was 40 percent in 2018.



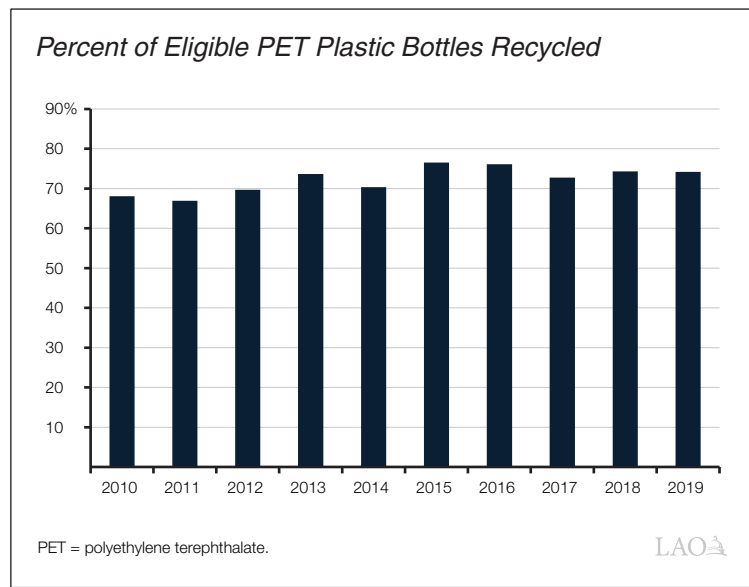
Plastics Are 12 Percent of Overall Disposed Waste Stream



- California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery estimates 4.5 million tons of plastics entered the landfills in 2018.
- There are a wide variety of plastic materials in the disposed waste stream, including food containers, packaging materials, trash bags, beverage containers, toys, and furniture.
- Plastics are a growing portion of overall waste disposal—increasing from 9.6 percent in 2008 to 11.5 percent in 2018.



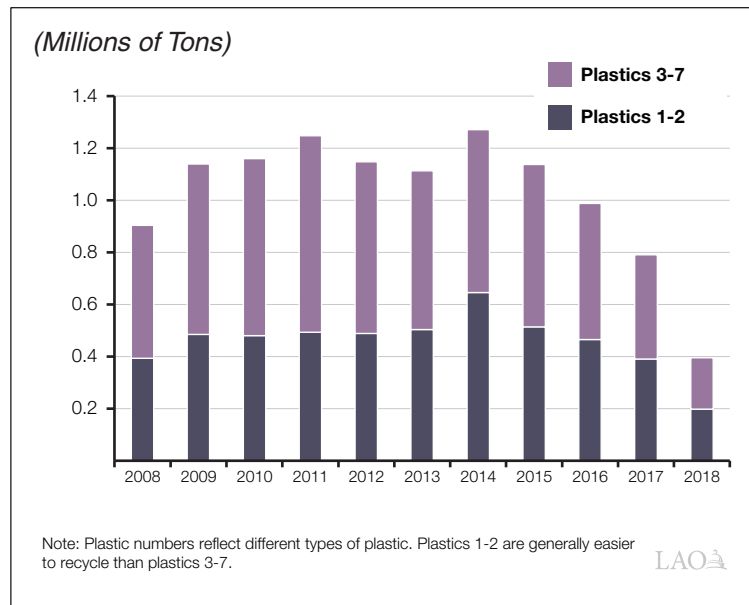
Plastic Beverage Container Recycling Rate Has Been Steady



- Recycling rate for common beverage containers that are part of BCRP has been at least 70 percent for most of the last decade. Reprocessing these types of containers is typically easier and less costly than other types of plastics. However, beverage containers subject to BCRP make up only very small share (about 2 percent to 3 percent) of overall plastics disposed of in California.
- Total number of recycled polyethylene terephthalate plastic beverage containers that are part of BCRP increased from 5.5 billion in 2010 to 9.2 million in 2019.



Significant Decline in Plastic Exports in Recent Years



- Historically, most recyclable plastic has been exported to other countries.
- Export of plastics has declined significantly in recent years due to increased regulations and restrictions on international import of plastic waste.
- New global requirements being implemented in 2021 could further reduce California's ability to rely on export markets for plastic recycling and waste.

