

Senate Bill 515

The Battery Stewardship Act

Senate Majority Leader Ellen M. Corbett

SUMMARY

Senate Bill 515 will require battery manufacturers to create and institute stewardship plans to deal with the end of life for their products.

PROBLEM

In early 2006 all household batteries were classified in California as Universal Waste and banned from solid waste landfills because they are harmful to our planet. That's good news for the environment. However, it can be difficult for consumers to find a place to recycle used batteries.

While current law, AB 1125 (2006), requires retailers to take back rechargeable batteries, non-rechargeable batteries account for 80 percent of batteries sold in California.

According to a California report, more than 500 million batteries are sold each year in California and that number is expected to rise. Today, it is estimated that only one-half of one percent of used batteries are recycled through local government household hazardous waste programs.

To manage this universal waste, local governments and taxpayers pay up to \$2700 per ton, which amounts to tens of millions of dollars each year.

Battery manufacturers have no incentive to be concerned about how much it costs taxpayers to properly and safely dispose of their products. Stewardship will ensure that the cost for end of life management is included in the product price, not a burden to the general taxpayers or garbage ratepayers.

SOLUTION

The California Integrated Waste Management Board adopted an overall Framework for an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) as a policy priority in January 2008.

Assembly Bill 2347 (2008) established California's first EPR program to manage mercury thermostats. Both Europe and Canada have successful EPR programs for household batteries.

EPR requires manufacturers to create their own product stewardship plans. The plans give flexibility to producers on how to deal with the end of life for their products while harmonizing California's recycling efforts with other national and international programs. Product stewardship will not only make recycling more convenient for consumers it will also create incentives for manufacturers to design safer products that have less environmental impacts.

BATTERY STEWARDSHIP

SB 515 will require battery manufacturers to design, fund and operate a stewardship program to properly manage batteries in order to sell their products in California. SB 515 will also require battery manufacturers to increase collection rates each year and report data to the Department of Resources, Recycling and Recovery who will oversee the implementation of each manufacturer's stewardship plan.

SB 515 will help local governments' bottom lines by saving tax-payer money used to manage toxic battery waste. It will also create green jobs recycling and collecting batteries. In addition, battery stewardship will help California's environment by ensuring that battery waste is properly managed.

SUPPORT

StopWaste.Org (Sponsor)
AREC Recycling
California Product Stewardship Council
California Resource Recovery Association
California Retailers Association
California Professional Firefighters
California State Association of Counties
Californians Against Waste
Center for Environmental Health
Central Contra Costa Sanitary District

Clean Water Action
City of Santa Monica
City of Roseville
City of Sunnyvale
City of Thousand Oaks
City of Torrance
City of Vernon
City of Woodland
County of Los Angeles
County of Napa
County of San Francisco
County of Santa Clara
County of Riverside
League of California Cities
Los Angeles County IWM Task Force
Humboldt Waste Management Authority
Monterey Regional Waste Authority
Napa Recycling & Waste Services
Sierra Club
Sierra Cost Management
Solid Waste Association of North America
Tamalpais Community Services District
Tehama County Sanitary Landfill Agency

STATUS

Senate Appropriations Committee

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