



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 9, 2021

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CA Lawmakers Propose Package of New Laws Tackling Plastic Waste Reduction

Sacramento, CA – While celebrating advocacy for protection of natural resources during Ocean Day at the State Capitol, legislators announced a package of bills to address the mounting waste crisis affecting California’s coastline, landfills, and ratepayers. Led by Senator Ben Allen (D - Santa Monica), the group includes Senator Scott Wiener (D - San Francisco), Assemblymember Phil Ting (D - San Francisco), Assemblymember Steve Bennett (D - Ventura), Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez (D - San Diego), Assemblymember Sydney Kamlager (D - Los Angeles), Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo (D - Los Angeles), and Assemblymember Laura Friedman (D - Glendale).

“Plastic waste is a global threat to our oceans, marine life, natural resources, and public health,” said Senator Allen, who chairs the Senate Environmental Quality Committee. “But it’s also hitting regular folks who are being asked to pay more and more through trash pickup rates to put patches on our broken waste management system. I’m glad to be joined by my colleagues as we work to tackle this issue. It’s going to take a coordinated, multi-faceted approach to begin to address this urgent financial, health, equity and environmental challenge.”

2021 Legislative Plastics & Waste Reduction Package:

[SB 54 \(Allen/Wiener/Stern/Gonzalez/Muratsuchi/Ting\) – Plastic Pollution Producer Responsibility Act](#)

SB 54 will ensure California is on the forefront of reducing pollution from single-use packaging and food serviceware waste by keeping the most problematic disposable items out of the waste system, saving local governments millions of dollars in disposal costs, and protecting the environment. The bill requires producers to reduce disposables by right-sizing packaging and shifting to reusables where possible. It also sets ambitious recycling and composting requirements for the material that does enter the state, requiring all disposable packaging and food serviceware to be truly recyclable or compostable by 2032.

[SB 343 \(Allen\) – Truth in Labeling for Recyclable Material](#)

SB 343 will reduce consumer confusion about which plastics are recyclable in California by building on California's "Truth in Environmental Advertising" law. This law prohibits the use of the word "recyclable" on products that are not. SB 343 will extend this prohibition to also include the chasing-arrows symbol, which most consumers believe denotes recyclability. This clarification will reduce contamination in the state's recycling system and enable consumers to make more informed choices.

AB 649 (Bennett) – California Buy Recycled

This bill requires state agencies to adhere to the same minimum content standards for procurement as private industry. As California's state government is the largest single purchaser in the state, the focus on recycled products can only help grow the market-share of recycled content products. The bill covers not only the purchasing of products by agencies and departments, but service contracts with outside contractors as well.

"As the single largest purchaser of goods and contracts in California, the state can create stronger economic incentives for businesses to use more recycled material in their products. AB 649 will ensure that State of California contracts and purchases contain the same amounts of recycled materials as private businesses are currently required to have. With global temperature and ocean pollution rising at an alarming rate, urgent, effective action towards a truly Circular Economy is needed," said Assemblymember Bennett.

AB 802 (Bloom) – Microfiber Filtration in State and Commercial Facilities

In order to reduce the leakage of microfibers into our natural environment, AB 802 aims to identify the best available control technology for microfiber filtration and require state agencies as well as commercial and industrial facilities to adopt such technology.

AB 818 (Bloom) – Wipes

Requires certain premoistened nonwoven disposable wipes to be labeled with the phrase "Do Not Flush" and prevents them from making flushable claims.

"We have an addiction to single use plastics that pose an unimaginable threat to our oceans, to the environment, and to human health. These bills will help us curb our addiction to single use plastics in a sustainable and business-friendly way," said Assemblymember Bloom.

AB 1276 (Carrillo) – Reduce Unnecessary Food Serviceware

AB 1276 will significantly reduce unnecessary waste and save businesses and local governments money. It expands the plastic straws upon request law to include other single-use food accessories, other food facilities, and third party delivery platforms - including food that is taken away, delivered, or served on-site. Additionally, for specified restaurants, reusable food serviceware is required for on-site dining.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has increased takeout and food delivery, which restaurants are relying upon to stay afloat. However, the use of disposable food accessories like plastic forks, spoons and knives, has led to a rise in single-use plastics and waste," said Assemblywoman Wendy Carrillo. *"AB 1276 is an important step to significantly reduce plastic waste that pollutes our oceans, harms marine life, harms our environment, and hurts low income communities of color while simultaneously providing financial savings to restaurants and local governments. AB 1276 will build on California's existing efforts*

to combat waste from single-use items by ensuring food and beverage accessories are provided only upon request to customers.”

AB 1371 (Friedman) – Plastic Film in E-Commerce

AB 1371 will reduce harmful environmental and economic impacts of unnecessary single-use plastic by phasing out the use of plastic films — such as mailers, void fill and polystyrene peanuts — in e-commerce packaging.

AB 622 (Friedman) – Microfiber Filtration in Consumer Washing Machines

AB 622 will reduce the flow of microplastics from washing machines into the environment by requiring all new washing machines sold in California to include a microfiber filtration device by 2024.

“Plastic is everywhere and has become one the world’s most urgent environmental challenges. We have gone way too long without action and it’s time to change that,” said Assemblymember Friedman. *“California can lead in the fight against microplastic and fiber pollution by setting standards that other nations and states will follow.”*

AB 881 (Gonzalez) – Recycling Export Reform

AB 881 would close the loophole in California law that enables exported mixed plastic waste to be deemed recycled even when it is landfilled, burned, dumped, or otherwise improperly managed. This would increase transparency and accountability for California’s waste management to ensure recycling truly means recycled into new products.

“There’s no time to waste. We have to stop treating our oceans and planet like a dumpster, and commit to urgently addressing the plastic pollution crisis to protect our communities and fragile ecosystems,” Assemblywoman Gonzalez said. *“AB 881 provides a real solution to make sure we’re being honest about how our plastic waste is disposed and whether it’s truly recyclable.”*

AB 962 (Kamlager) – Returnable Beverage Bottles

AB 962 will pave the way for returnable beverage bottle systems in California by allowing returnable (“refillable”) bottles to flow through the state’s Beverage Container Recycling Program. Rather than being crushed for recycling, the bottles can be preserved to be washed and refilled by beverage producers.

“According to a study in the World Wide Fund for Nature, human beings are consuming 1,769 tiny plastic particles and fibers every week. We have plastic waste in our beaches, rivers, oceans, and waterways. We must move faster and take action to protect our natural environment and improve our health down the line. I believe these bills are important steps in implementing a more sustainable option for our future,” said Assemblymember Kamlager.

AB 478 (Ting) – Thermoform Minimum Content

This bill will support California’s recycling industry by setting minimum recycled content requirements for plastic thermoform food containers (i.e. berry boxes). Similar to last year’s AB 793, this bill would establish minimum recycled content using a phased approach – starting at 10% and eventually reaching 30%. The bill would also set penalties for manufacturers that do not meet the requirements, with the penalties increasing as the recycled content decreases.

AB 1201 (Ting) – Compost

This bill bans the sale of plastic products that are labeled “compostable” unless it meets specified standards and criteria.

“Single-use consumption is hurting us. We need to rethink what we put in our waste stream and redesign products so they can be repurposed into something else later on. If we don’t, future generations will be forced to clean up our irresponsibility. A circular economy makes sense for California because it generates new job opportunities, while also providing environmental benefits,” said Assemblymember Phil Ting, author of AB 478.

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Ben Allen represents the 26th State Senate District, which consists of the Hollywood, Westside, and South Bay communities of Los Angeles County, and serves as Chair of the Senate Environmental Quality Committee and the Joint Committee on the Arts.