

# California, US introduces bill for collection & recycling of textiles

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## Textiles

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California's senator Josh Newman has introduced a bill to create a state-wide collection and recycling programme for textiles. Under SB 707, producers of clothing and other textiles will be required to implement and fund an extended producer responsibility (EPR) programme that will enhance recycling and increase reuse in the textile sector.

"Though many people don't realise it, the clothing and fashion industry currently accounts for fully 10 per cent of the world's carbon dioxide output," said **senator Newman (D-Fullerton)**. "The rise of 'fast fashion,' which revolves around the marketing and sale of low-cost, low-quality garments which tend to go out of style with increasing speed, threatens to have a long-lasting and devastating impact on our planet. By employing an EPR approach,

SB 707 will enrol industry participants as partners and stewards to create an end-to-end framework that will reduce textile waste in California while supporting a second-hand clothing market that can continue to thrive.”

Each year, the average US consumer discards more than 81 pounds of clothing, an increase of 55 per cent per capita since the year 2000. Even though 95 per cent of the materials commonly found in textiles are either reusable or recyclable, the current share of used clothes and other textiles which are either reused or recycled in the US remains at only approximately 15 per cent.

The fibres within most clothing items and textiles, if properly sorted and processed, are highly suitable for recycling and repurposing into new products. SB 707 will require producers to implement an end-to-end system to optimise the repair or recycling of textiles, including apparel, accessories, handbags, backpacks, draperies, shower curtains, furnishings, upholstery, bedding, towels, napkins, and tablecloths.

Under this programme, thrifts and clothing collectors, which have long served as an effective second-hand market for textiles, will be further utilised as collection sites and will also be part of an integrated system for sorting and ultimately recycling used textiles that cannot be reused or resold.

“Textiles have been identified as a top material, and the fastest growing category, in residential and commercial waste streams in California. Local governments face costly challenges expanding textile collection and sorting since the materials can absorb, tangle, and combust if mixed into plastic recycling systems,” **said Doug Kobold, executive director of California Product Stewardship Council, sponsor of SB 707.** “The cost burden for managing unusable textiles has fallen on thrifts, collectors, and second-hand markets, while producers keep making products with no plan for what to do with them when they are no longer wearable. California continues to lead by holding producers accountable for planning and funding an ongoing repair and recycling program for managing unusable textiles and apparel.”

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