

California Textile Recycling Repair Legislation

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In California, Textile Waste Is Out of Fashion

“Though many people don’t realize it, the clothing and fashion industry currently accounts for fully 10% of the world’s carbon dioxide output,” began by saying Senator Josh Newman upon announcing a statewide collection and recycling program for textiles — and he is indisputably right.

Senator Newman continued, “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.”

Meanwhile, Doug Kobold, Executive Director of the [California](#) Product Stewardship Council stressed how textiles in [California](#) are a rapidly growing category of residential and commercial waste streams. He also added, “The cost burden for managing unusable textiles has fallen on 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.”

According to research, the industry is now producing twice as many clothes as it did 20 years ago, with garment use has decreased significantly. Naturally, this take-make-waste model has fragmented production systems everywhere and increased the exploitative use of resources, such as soil degradation, use of natural ecosystems for raw material production, waterway pollution, diversity loss, etc.

Of course, many of us understand this polluting model urgently needs rethinking and can't help but wonder, what are we waiting for? In fact, only recently, the [Ellen MacArthur Foundation \(2021\)](#) reported that of all of the materials used to make clothes, 87% end up in landfill or burned.

To start an inexorable push toward a [circular economy](#), Senator Newman has introduced the bill SB 707, under which producers of clothing and other textiles are required to fund an extended producer responsibility (EPR) program that enables the [recycling](#) and repairing of garments.

“SB 707 will enroll 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,” explained Senator Newman.

Nicole Suydam, President and CEO of Goodwill of Orange County and Chair of the [California](#) Council of Goodwills, shared: “My Goodwill colleagues across [California](#) and I look forward to working in partnership with Senator Newman and the [California](#) Product Stewardship Council to accelerate this important work and ensure a more sustainable future for all.”

The SB 707 bill is a meaningful first step towards a sustainable, market-aligned, [circular economy](#). Holding producers accountable for unusable textiles and apparel is something we hope to see start happening in other regions and countries. In the meantime, to get familiar with [California's](#) first-of-its-kind EPR program, visit [this link](#).

Image: Beyond Retro.