

Loose Batteries

The Problem



Picture: Fire started by battery improperly disposed in recycling at Shoreway Environmental Center Materials Recovery Facility (Source: ReThinkWaste)

Studies show that people store used, dead, or corroded batteries because they inherently know they have value and should not be thrown in the trash. Some states, including California, have banned batteries from trash disposal. It's time to provide consumers with a convenient way to recycle those batteries and put that valuable resource back into the economic mainstream, creating jobs in the process. Like most used products, **batteries should be seen as a commodity and a business opportunity, not waste!**

According to the California Integrated Waste Management Board's 2002 report [Household Universal Waste Generation in California](#), more than 500 million batteries were sold in California in 2001. Only 0.55% of these were recycled through city and county household hazardous waste programs and at a significant cost to ratepayers and taxpayers; costs were estimated to exceed \$31 million per year!

The Solution

The first piece of legislation to establish an extended producer responsibility program for batteries in California began in 2014 with [AB 2284 \(Williams\)](#), which would have established a statewide stewardship program for household batteries. In 2020, CPSC co-sponsored legislation, [AB 1509](#), addressing producer responsibility in safe battery management, which was reintroduced in 2021 as [SB 289 \(Newman\)](#). The legislation was once again introduced in 2022, but as two separate bills, [AB 2440 \(Irwin\)](#) and [SB 1215 \(Newman\)](#). In September of 2022, Governor Newsom signed AB 2440, establishing the Responsible Battery Recycling Act of 2022, and SB 1215 which amended the Electronic Waste Recycling Act and added covered battery-embedded products to the CEW Recycling Program. Learn more about the programs on the CalRecycle website:

- AB 2440: <https://calrecycle.ca.gov/epr/batteries/>
- SB 1215: <https://calrecycle.ca.gov/electronics/embeddedbatteries/>

Taking Action

In 2018, Assemblymember Bloom sent three letters regarding Lithium Ion batteries in consumer products. One letter to CalRecycle, one to CalFire, and one to Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), each addressing the health and safety hazards associated with mishandling of lithium ion batteries.

- [DTSC Lithium Ion Letter from Assemblymember Bloom- 6-2018](#)
- [CalRecycle Lithium Ion Letter from Assemblymember Bloom- 6-2018](#)
- [CalFire Lithium Ion Letter from Assemblymember Bloom- 6-2018](#)

In 2013, 27 environmental organizations asked battery and lamp manufacturers to form a partnership to establish much needed take-back programs for their products:

- [Environmental Groups Press Rayovac for Battery Recycling](#) – Catherine Kavanaugh, Waste & Recycling News, 8/1/13

In 2011, CPSC was the primary grant partner on the [San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments'](#) (SGVCG) pilot project to demonstrate how battery manufacturers can design a statewide stewardship program that provides convenient battery collection locations. **The project found that 59 percent of Californians surveyed were aware of the disposal ban on batteries – but 56 percent still threw them in the trash.**

Corporate Stewardship

Power by Go Green

[Power by Go Green](#) (formerly PerfPower Corporation) is a technology company offering sustainable products, including batteries, flashlights, and extension cords/surge protectors. Their GoGreen Alkaline Batteries are made of recycled materials and can be recycled free-of-charge using the company's [iRecycled](#) program. They are also free of toxic lead, cadmium, or mercury.

Call2Recycle Battery Stewardship Program

[Call2Recycle](#) is North America's first and largest battery stewardship program that collects and recycles rechargeables free-of-charge in the U.S. and Canada. Since 1996, Call2Recycle has diverted more than 100 million pounds of rechargeable batteries and cell phones from landfills. [Click Here to Update your Safety Training.](#)

Safely Dispose of Your Used Batteries

- [Call2Recycle](#) – Statewide
- [Earth 911](#) – Nationwide

Research & Relevant Articles

- [Why Recycling Plants Keep Catching on Fire](#) - TIME, 4/13/23
- [Fire incidents increased at waste, recycling facilities in 2022](#) – Waste Today Magazine, 3/22/23
- [The Story of Why We Need Safe Battery Management](#) – CPSC, 3/8/22
- [Lithium Battery Fires Are Threatening Recycling as We Know It](#) - VICE, 2/1/2022
- [An Analysis of Lithium-ion Battery Fires in Waste Management and Recycling](#) – US EPA, July 2021
- [Recommendations for Tackling Fires Caused by Lithium Batteries in WEEE](#)- WEEE Forum, July 2021
- [Reducing Lithium-Ion Battery Fires in Waste Facilities - Part Two](#)- Waste360, 4/2/21
- [Battery Fire Report](#) – CPSC, 3/18/21
- [4th Annual Reported Waste & Recycling Facility Fires US/CAN](#) – Fire Rover, 03/2021
- [Managing Small Consumer Batteries - Part 2](#) - Waste Advantage Magazine, 2/3/21



- [Managing Small Consumer Batteries - Part 1](#) - Waste Advantage Magazine, 1/3/21
- [Short circuiting the circular economy](#) – Resource Recycling, 6/19/19
- [Survey Results Regarding Fires in the Waste Management Industry](#) – CPSC, 4/9/18

MythBusters Jr. show illustrates the danger of putting batteries into our waste stream:
<https://youtu.be/VnLnjD444rA>