

Q&A: Doug Kobold of the California Product Stewardship Council discusses how products can be disposed of properly without harming the environment

sacramento.newsreview.com/2022/04/20/qa-doug-kobold-of-the-california-product-stewardship-council-discusses-how-products-can-be-disposed-of-properly-without-harming-the-environment

By Jeff vonKaenel

April 20, 2022



What do unused medications, batteries, cell phones, paint and motor oil have in common? For one, if they are dumped in the wrong place, they cause serious harm to humans, animals, soil and water.

That's where the California Product Stewardship Council steps in, as it works to push (ideally) manufacturers to pay for what is known as 'end-of-life'—or disposal—costs for their products. Responsibility for a few items is on the manufacturers alone, some is shared between manufacturers and state agencies, but most items are funded completely by consumers through a 'visible fee' at the time of purchase (like mattresses, paint, carpet, tires, televisions or computer monitors).

To learn more about this issue, we turned to Doug Kobold, executive director of CPSC, who discusses the successes, the challenges and the ongoing work of his agency.

What are some of California Product Stewardship Council's successful campaigns?

CPSC has two long-running campaigns and has added two more recently. The two long-running ones are related to safe disposal of unused/unwanted pharmaceuticals. The second is about a more environmentally friendly alternative to the single-use 1-pound propane gas cylinders.

Don't Rush To Flush: This campaign was created back in May of 2013 as a way to start educating the general public about the problems with flushing unused/unwanted medications down the toilet. We have continued to maintain and update the website that contains lots of helpful information and a mapping widget to find safe disposal bins.

<https://www.dontrushtoflush.org>

Refuel Your Fun & \$ave!: The Refuel campaign launched in March of 2015 and has been the cornerstone of our mission to provide California consumers with educational materials about why they should switch from single-use propane cylinders to reusable/refillable 1-pound cylinders. Through more than 30 CalRecycle HD Household Hazardous Waste grants, reusable/refillable cylinders have been provided to consumers to help them make that switch.

<https://www.refuelyourfun.org/>

Statewide Textile Recovery Advisory Committee: CPSC formed the textile recovery committee in July of 2020 to bring together experts from a variety of stakeholder groups to explore how to better recover used textiles from the waste stream and move those materials onto higher and better uses than just shipping them offshore or sending them to Waste-To-Energy or landfill. <https://www.calpsc.org/textilestewardship>

Durable, Reusable, Repairable, Recyclable or DR Cubed: Modeled after the European Union's work to create an initiative for more sustainable products, CPSC created DR³ in March 2021 as a means to help educate consumers and manufacturers alike about the importance of making products more durable so they last longer, more reusable so that they can be passed down in usable condition, more repairable when they break rather than needing to be replaced, and more recyclable when the first three objectives can not be met.

<https://www.calpsc.org/campaigns>



Doug Kobald, executive director
California Product Stewardship

CPSC is co-sponsoring...AB 2440 (Irwin) & SB 1215 (Newton), which will establish a program for loose household batteries and embedded battery products to help ensure that batteries of all chemistries, especially Lithium Ion batteries, are properly managed through a producer-funded, consumer-convenient collection and recycling system.

Doug Kobald, executive director of California product stewardship council

What is on your legislative agenda for 2022?

CPSC is sponsoring bills in two areas in 2022. First, CPSC is co-sponsoring two identical bills in the California Legislature in 2022, AB 2440 (Irwin) & SB 1215 (Newton), which will establish a program for loose household batteries and embedded battery products to help ensure that batteries of all chemistries, especially Lithium Ion batteries, are properly managed through a producer-funded, consumer-convenient collection and recycling system.

CPSC's other bill is SB 1256 (Wieckowski) that establishes a ban on the sale of single-use 1-pound propane cylinders in California on and after January 1, 2028. CPSC has spent the last seven years educating the public on the benefits of switching to refillable/reusable cylinders, while at the same time helping to create a robust refilling infrastructure and newer exchange program that can be on par with the existing 20-pound barbecue cylinder exchange programs. This bill gives the industry five years to convert over to refillables, which will be plenty of time.

Which legislators are leading the way or have shown leadership in environmental legislation?

The ones that stand out for me are:

Assemblymember Irwin, Assemblymember Quirk, Assemblymember Friedman, Assemblymember Ting, Assemblymember Bloom, Assemblymember L. Rivas;

Senator Newman, Senator Wieckowski, Senator Allen, Senator Eggman, Senator Kamlager.

And OK, just for fun Doug: Ice cream, cake or pie? Are you a dog, cat or snake person? What movie star would portray you in a film?

Ice cream, dog, Old West Cowboy

Thank you for your time today.