

Mattresses

The Problem

When recycling or disposal programs are inaccessible, unaffordable, or inconvenient, illegal dumping increases. This pattern is seen with many bulky items, including tires and mattresses. Without easy and affordable options, individuals are more likely to dispose of these items improperly, creating a public nuisance and causing environmental harm.

Mattress waste has historically placed a significant financial burden on California communities. Each year, illegally dumped mattresses cost municipalities millions in cleanup efforts. Due to their size and weight, mattresses are difficult to handle and transport, and often require consumers to have access to a truck or other reliable means of transportation for proper disposal. These logistical challenges make it costly and inefficient for local governments to manage mattress waste through individual programs.

In addition to the economic impact, discarded mattresses take up excessive landfill space and strain local waste infrastructure. While the state has made important progress through extended producer responsibility (EPR) legislation and coordinated recycling programs, continued investment in sustainable, convenient disposal solutions is essential to protect both communities and the environment.

The Bedding Industry's Innovative Solution: Mattress Recycling Council

Recognizing these challenges, California adopted a statewide, industry-led solution. The Mattress Recycling Council (MRC) is the designated stewardship organization responsible for implementing California's Mattress Recycling Program, established by Senate Bill 254 (Hancock) in 2013. The program aims to reduce illegal dumping, increase mattress recycling, and support a circular economy through statewide collection, processing, and public outreach initiatives. Under CalRecycle's oversight, MRC administers the program by coordinating drop-off and collection locations, funding local government partnerships, and investing in innovation to improve recovery outcomes. MRC uses a consumer-facing brand known as Bye Bye Mattress when conducting public outreach.

Since beginning in 2016, more than 13 million mattresses have been recycled and the program has led to the diversion of 490 million pounds of valuable material such as steel, foam and fibers from landfills.

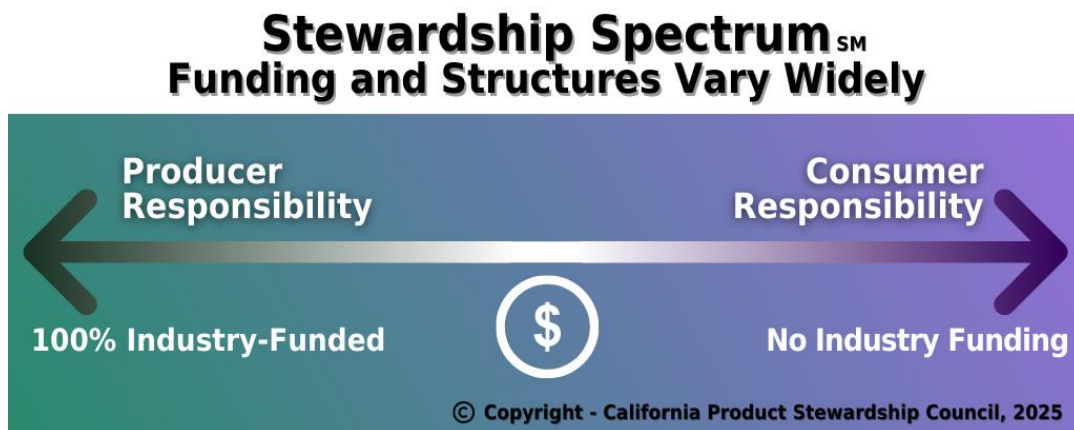
The program is also consistent with California's waste management hierarchy. MRC actively addresses source reduction by focusing on reducing the environmental footprint of the mattress manufacturing process, encouraging the mattress supply chain to consider end-of-life design issues when creating new products, and encouraging consumers to maintain their mattresses properly to extend its useful life.

Key highlights of MRC's program performance include:

- For the ninth straight year, MRC **increased recycling access** for residents, retailers, and businesses, surpassing CalRecycle access goals.
- MRC's wide network and partnerships ensure **recycling services reach all parts of California**, including rural and underserved communities.
- Each year, MRC's recyclers divert about **75% of materials** by weight from disposal, yielding over **60 million pounds** of steel, foam, fiber, and wood for new products.
- MRC allocates up to **\$1 million annually for research** to improve mattress collection, transportation, deconstruction, and find new uses for recycled materials.
- And also up to **\$1 million per year for pilot projects** to reduce illegally dumped mattresses and to gather data from local governments and authorized waste handlers on removed, abandoned mattresses.

For detailed information, view the Mattress Recycling Council's Annual Reports:
<https://calrecycle.ca.gov/Mattresses/MROReports>

A Strong Foundation: The Policy and Legislation for Mattresses in California



The image illustrates the **Stewardship Spectrum**, which highlights the range of funding and structural models for product stewardship programs. The spectrum emphasizes how responsibility for funding stewardship programs can vary widely between producers and consumers. In the case of mattress waste, the solution falls on the consumer responsibility end of the spectrum.

SB 254 (Hancock) – Enacted in 2013

[SB 254 \(Hancock\)](#) was established to reduce illegal dumping, increase mattress recycling, and significantly lower public agency costs for the end-of-use management of used mattresses. The legislation requires the mattress industry to create a statewide recycling program to increase the recovery and recycling of mattresses at their end of use. The Program, administered by the [Mattress Recycling Council](#) (MRC), is funded through a \$16 recycling fee collected at the point of sale for every mattress or box spring purchased. Through its [Bye Bye Mattress California program](#), the MRC fulfills these requirements by offering consumers convenient mattress recycling services. Since 2016, the California program has collected over 13 million mattresses, saving an estimated 12.5 million cubic yards of landfill space

Additionally, California law requires retailers to take back old mattresses at no additional cost when delivering a new mattress. If your retailer fails to comply, you can report them at info@byebyemattress.com.

SB 1274 (Hancock) – Enacted in 2014

[SB 1274](#) (Hancock) provided additional clarity to SB 254 by refining definitions, reporting requirements, and record-keeping processes to enhance the effectiveness of the mattress recycling program.

AB 187 (Garcia) – Enacted in 2019

[AB 187 \(Garcia\)](#) introduced improvements to California’s mattress stewardship program to ensure sustainability, protect recycling jobs, and prioritize in-state processing. Key enhancements include:

1. Expanding the program’s scope to include futons and mattresses delivered by common carriers.
2. Setting measurable program goals to improve consumer access.
3. Developing strategies to collect used mattresses in underserved communities facing challenges such as poverty, language barriers, and illegal dumping.
4. Establishing a “bridge plan” to safeguard the \$40+ million in recycling fees and ensure uninterrupted program funding if the stewardship organization ceases to operate.

This legislation also established the California Mattress Advisory Committee (MAC), which oversees the program’s implementation and performance. MAC provides recommendations to ensure the program achieves its goals and adheres to state regulations while addressing community needs.

MRC's California Illegal Dumping Compensation Program for Mattresses

MRC's California Illegally Dumped Mattress Collection Initiative (IDMCI) helps offset costs associated with cleaning up illegally dumped mattresses and box springs in California by providing qualifying urban and rural local governments, participating permitted solid waste facilities and authorized solid waste operations payments for data about the illegally dumped mattress and box springs collected from the public rights-of-way.



Source: Mattress Recycling Council

Since its inception, IDMCI has reimbursed local governments over \$5 million for the cleanup of over 400,000 illegally dumped mattresses, significantly reducing the financial burden on cities and counties. In 2024 alone, the program provided payments for more than 64,000 units, helping to divert these materials from landfills and illegal dump sites into the formal recycling system (MRC, 2024 Annual Report). This statewide effort not only reduces public cleanup costs but also supports environmental goals by recovering recyclable materials like foam, steel, and fabric.

For more information or to participate, visit the IDMCI registration page or contact [Taylor Grimes](#) at MRC for more information.

- [Registration](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Media Offerings from the Bye Bye Mattress Program](#)

Research & Relevant [Articles](#)

- [MRC's 10-Year Triumph: Leading the Way in Mattress Recycling](#) - BedTimes, 4/3/2025
- [Mattress Recycling Challenges Addressed: Industry Insights](#) – BedTimes, 4/3/2024
- [Lifecycle Analysis Finds Mattress Recycling Cuts Emissions, Reduces Water and Energy Consumption](#) – Recycling Product News, 2/6/2023
- [Mattress Recycling Research: Exploring new uses for Old Mattress Materials](#) – Waste Advantage, 3/31/2022
- [CalRecycle GHG Mattress study](#), 5/2012

Links

- [Mattress Recycling Council](#) website
- [Bye Bye Mattress](#) – California, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Oregon mattress recycling programs operated by the Mattress Recycling Council