

# Don't forget about carpets in climate change fight | The Sacramento Bee

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By Bill Magavern Special to The Bee

Unprecedented and catastrophic flooding in Puerto Rico, Texas and Florida; wildfires in Northern California; and record heat waves – each is a stark reminder of the threat of climate change.

To respond, we need to attack it at its source – emissions from fossil fuels. That includes carpets, which are 99 percent plastic, made from fossil fuels.

## Opinion

[More than four billion pounds of carpets](#) are dumped in landfills or burned in incinerators each year in the U.S., including [257 million pounds in landfills](#) and 20 million pounds burned just in California last year. And because carpet production is projected to grow, the way carpets are produced and discarded has significant implications.

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Gov. Jerry Brown has signed a first-in-the-nation measure, [Assembly Bill 1158](#), that requires manufacturers to increase carpet recycling from 11 percent now to 24 percent by 2020.

Introduced by Assemblyman Kansen Chu, a San Jose Democrat, and sponsored by the National Action Stewardship Council, the bill also ends consumer subsidies for carpet incineration and offers incentives to produce more recyclable carpets, thereby [reducing greenhouse gas emissions](#) and creating green jobs.

For every additional percentage point of carpet that gets recycled instead of incinerated, the equivalent of 5,934 tons of carbon emissions are avoided. If the industry had recycled all carpet discards since 2010, California would have reduced emissions by the equivalent of 500,000 cars annually.

California's ambitious cap-and-trade system and its embrace of the historic Paris Accord will require all industries to take aggressive action to achieve our goals. AB 1158 will help our state reach its target of emitting 40 percent fewer greenhouse gases by 2030. California carpets will become part of the solution to climate change instead of part of the problem.

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