

# California legislator continues to push for textiles EPR law

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California's Responsible Textile Recovery Act of 2024, or Senate Bill 707, which Sen. Josh Newman calls a "landmark, first-in-the-country, textile recycling bill," has passed a recent California Assembly Natural Resources Committee vote 9-3.

The bill establishes a "robust" extended producer responsibility (EPR) program that will require producers to implement and fund a program to facilitate the reuse, repair and recycling of clothing and textile fibers.

Newman had also attempted to get California to move forward with SB 707 last year, citing at the time a reaction in part to the fast fashion trend, as he has again this year.

"I'm very proud of the thoughtful and thorough work, involving stakeholders at every point of the value chain, that has gone into SB 707 to produce a bill that will have an immensely positive impact on our state and on the environment," Newman says. "Textile waste is a growing environmental issue that will require innovation and collaboration. This bill, and the groundbreaking program it will enable, will make California a global leader in textile recycling and waste reduction."

Since its introduction last year, SB 707 has been subject to “extensive stakeholder engagement,” according to Newman. A news release issued by the legislature says that the ensuing collaborative process has resulted in dozens of improvements as the result of hundreds of hours of stakeholder meetings with a diverse coalition, including environmental organizations, industry leaders and community groups.

Newman says the bill has received widespread support and cites the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC), Ikea, Goodwill, Sierra Club California and waste and recycling firm Republic Services as examples, as well as numerous local governments, agencies and sanitation districts.

“At Ikea, we have an ambition to become a circular business by 2030,” says Mardi Ditze, United States sustainability manager for the Sweden-based retailer. “To achieve this, we must partner with policymakers to support efforts in creating more circular systems for textiles and other products. We applaud Senator Newman for leading a collaborative process with industry stakeholders on SB 707 and support efforts to increase textile circularity in California and across the U.S.”

### **Gaeta Recycling Achieves optimal efficiency with Sennebogen purpose-built waste handler.**

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In its 85 years in business, Gaeta Recycling has operated a lot of machines. Michael Portannese is the fifth generation of his family to lead the company. Serving 30 municipalities in central New Jersey, Gaeta Recycling processes upwards of 720 tons of waste material per day. Moving material is at the heart of his business and, over the years, he has watched loading equipment become increasingly sophisticated and complex. But for his most recent purchase, Portannese was ready to try a different approach.

“Textile recycling is a growing industry domestically, creating jobs and reviving manufacturing in areas near recycling facilities,” says Peter Majeranowski, CEO of Circ Inc., a Virginia-based textile recycler. “We’ve seen the fashion industry really step up to adopt fibers and yarns with lower impacts.”

SB 707 next will head to the California Assembly Appropriations Committee for a hearing and consideration before moving to the full assembly.

“The rise of ‘fast fashion,’ or the marketing and sale of low-cost, low-quality garments that fall out of vogue with increasing speed, is a major contributor to these devastating trends,” Newman says. “In 2021, approximately 1.2 million tons of textiles were disposed of in

California. Despite 95 percent of textiles being reusable or recyclable, only 15 percent are currently recycled or reused,” according to Newman.

SB 707 will “facilitate a transition to a sustainable, market-aligned and circular economy for textiles, unlocking both new production and consumption opportunities that will benefit the environment,” say its backers, adding, “The bill will also strengthen the ability of thrift stores and charities to handle unsellable garments and combat textile waste by incentivizing the use of more sustainable and easier to recycle materials.”

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