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California's Textile EPR Sets Out to Transform Supply Chains

The fashion and textile industry, notorious for its massive waste footprint, has long operated in silos. But California's textiles extended producer responsibility (EPR) law—the nation's first—is set to change that. At least in California.



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[SB 707](#), slated for full implementation July 2030, aims to transform fragmented supply chain operations into an interconnected ecosystem to manage end-of-life textiles. Already, stakeholders—from brands and retailers to recyclers—are aligning to jointly tackle California's million-ton annual waste problem.

Modeled after established European frameworks, the law designates LandBell USA to build and manage a statewide system for collecting, repairing, reusing, and recycling products. Manufacturers, brands, and some retailers will pick up the tab.

Meeting SB 707's requirements will be an enormous, pricey task. One of LandBell's first charges as the producer responsibility organization (PRO) is to implement a funding model that levels the playing field, making sure costs remain equitable.

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"We are prioritizing a 'scaled_to_size' approach, ultimately ensuring that once the program goes live, compliance costs are proportionate to the volume of materials a company places on the market. The goal is to ensure that even our smallest partners have a clear path to compliance without needing expensive, dedicated regulatory teams," says Patrick Gibbs, executive director of Landbell USA.

The stewardship organization will leverage an eco-modulated fee structure, which rewards brands' circular business practices at the design stage.

The intent is to turn sustainability into a bottom-line advantage rather than just an operational cost. So, brands that design for durability, or invest in their own repair and reuse services, will see those efforts reflected in lower fees.

The program is built with the retailer's operational reality at the forefront too.

"We view retailers as essential partners, not just collection points. To offset their operational investment, we are exploring reimbursement structures and logistical support, such as scheduled pick-up services, to minimize store-floor disruption," Gibbs says.

Material reuse and repair is a foundational cornerstone of the law. As the driving force behind these practices, charities and thrift shops are deemed key stakeholders. Under the new framework, they will receive funding to sustain and expand their day-to-day collection, sorting, reselling, and recycling ventures.

It's a symbiotic partnership.

"By integrating [nonprofits'] vast collection networks and logistical expertise, we can scale circularity faster while helping them continue their essential social and economic missions," Gibbs says.

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Landbell is carrying out a statewide needs assessment to identify system-wide infrastructure gaps, heavily focusing on technological requirements for sorting and processing.

The California Product Stewardship Council has been running trials to [test feedstock batches with sorters and recyclers in several cities](#). San Francisco for example is sending medical textiles for recycling, while the City of Angeles produced a cotton fabric with 40% recycled content sourced from factory waste.

Textiles recycler Looptworks has an operational facility ready to support the anticipated up in volume that will drive a greater need for these technologies. Though founder and CEO Scott Hamlin says he is moving at the pace of the legislation; he is cautious to not speculate on exactly what to expect from the market.

For now, he and his team are focused on growing their sorting and fiber-to-fiber recycling capacity and capabilities to handle what will inevitably be more materials and material types.

Looptworks already has established partnerships along the supply chain.

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"Each collaboration is unique as each partner is in a different place along the journey towards compliance and circularity," Hamlin says.

The company works with spinners, knitters and weavers, and is helping some brands incorporate textile-to-textile recycled fibers into their products; helping them create take-back programs; and providing impact metrics and traceability data so they can report their progress.

"Legislation like SB 707 helps bring members of the supply chain together to solve complex challenges while diverting waste from landfill. These efforts will ultimately help advance our own broader organizational goals as well," Hamlin says.

The Association of California Goodwills' (ACG) 13 agencies collect about 175 to 200 million pounds of textiles a year. They are working hard to add capacity.

For reuse, collection infrastructure will need to expand a little, but the ACG believes collection infrastructure largely exists today.

"Ninety-four percent of Californians live within 10 miles of a Goodwill collection site, and when other non-profit thrift organizations like Salvation Army and Habitat for Humanity are added, Californians should have accessible donation sites in their area," says Jake Slayton, public policy chair, Association of California Goodwills.

California Goodwills plans to open more sites in 2026 and is conducting repair pilots to explore viability on a mass scale.

"Goodwills are local agencies with access to national resources and best practices. We have been doing textile circularity for almost 125 years. The state of California and producers will find a willing partner that offers them expertise, infrastructure, and flexibility for stakeholders to achieve their goals," Slayton says.

Women's apparel brand Reformation has a suite of programs designed to extend the life of its products, including repair services and resale partnerships. One of the most ambitious and popular initiatives is a takeback program called RefRecycling, run in partnership with a logistics company and recycler where what comes back is broken down into fibers to be spun into new materials.

"RefRecycling provides valuable experience with consumer takeback and reverse logistics, but SB 707 is expected to establish a broader, industry-wide collection and producer responsibility system," says Beba Greer, director of sustainable operations & engagement, Reformation.

"It's exciting to consider all brands and retailers will be responsible for end-of-life management now. We expect we'll be able to accomplish more together when this is an industry-wide mandate," she says.

The company is closely monitoring the development of eco-modulated fee structures and evaluating how they may influence future design decisions.

"While it's still early, we're using this opportunity to better understand the relationship between product design, end-of-life outcomes, and long-term circularity, rather than simply thinking about optimizing around fee structures," Greer says.

For Reformation, preparing for what lies ahead will mean ramping up its focus on designing for circularity. It will mean investing in staff education. And preparing its systems for future EPR reporting and compliance, Greer says.

She emphasizes, "As the program develops, we're closely watching how California's collection and recycling infrastructure will evolve to support a truly circular textile economy."

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About the Author



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Arlene Karidis has 30 years' cumulative experience reporting on health and environmental topics for B2B and consumer publications of a global, national and/or regional reach, including Waste360, Washington Post, The Atlantic, Huffington Post, Baltimore Sun and lifestyle and parenting magazines...

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