

Mattress Product Management
Written Comments Received on California Mattress Stewardship
Program Annual Reports

This page contains stakeholder comments on Mattress Stewardship program Annual Reports.

Comments received by CalRecycle on the Mattress Recycling Council's (MRC) 2017 Annual Report* (Year 2)

Commenter	Representing	Comment
Kelly McBee	Mattress Advisory Committee	Letter: July 18, 2018
Tedd Ward	Del Norte Solid Waste Management Authority	Letter: July 18, 2018

CalRecycle requested that public comments on the Annual Report be sent to mattresses@calrecycle.ca.gov through July 18, 2018.



CALIFORNIA MATTRESS RECYCLING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Helping to answer the question of what to do with that old mattress!

July 18, 2018

Ms. Heather Beckner
Ms. Nikki Castagneto
CalRecycle 1001 I Street -P.O. Box 4025
Sacramento, CA 95812-4025

Subject: 2017 MRC Annual Report and 2019 Program Budget

Ms. Beckner & Ms. Castagneto,

The California Mattress Recycling Advisory Committee (Committee) thanks you for the opportunity to comment on both the 2017 Mattress Recycling Council (MRC) Annual Report (Annual Report) and 2019 Program Budget (Budget) related to the California Mattress Recycling Program (Program). While individual Committee members may have comments specific to their industry sector or specific to their organization, the comments below combine the views of this diverse body and present the unified perspective of the entire Committee.

General Comments

For the last two years of the Program's full operation, the upcoming program year budget and the preceding program year's annual report have been compiled and presented as two separate documents. Instead, the Committee recommends the annual reports and program budgets be compiled and presented as a single document. By existing separately, evaluation of program successes or pitfalls and resultant changes in the budget for future operations are not transparent or easy to follow. The Committee recommends that the MRC merge the two documents in the future and make references throughout the report portion to how the budget is adequate to fund the program goals.

In recognition of the Program's expansion, the Committee recommends that the MRC hire at least one additional staff person to focus solely on California's Program. Many of the Committee's comments are intended to refine this relatively new Program, but require a significant investment by the MRC to execute. Additionally, as the only state with a formal Advisory Committee for our mattress recycling program, the Committee recognizes that frequent communications with our Committee members and participation by the MRC in the Committee's public quarterly meetings, quarterly coordination meetings with CalRecycle, and Subcommittee meetings require a significant time investment by the MRC as well. The MRC's participation in these meetings has been very valuable and the Committee is interested in ensuring the MRC's continued participation by hiring additional staff.

Diversion and Commodity Markets Subcommittee (DCM Subcommittee) Comments

Focus on Source Reduction: Public Resources Code Section 42987.1. (a) requires the MRC to operate the Program in accordance with the waste management hierarchy and therefore prioritize source reduction. Information in the Annual Report regarding how the MRC adhered to this hierarchy is sparse and our comments are similar to those we had in 2016 and in our 2017 Annual Report to the MRC, but that were not addressed: *Did the MRC encourage producers to redesign for recyclability or recyclers to follow the hierarchy by selling their best mattresses to refurbishers? Has the MRC*



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engaged with consumers about extending the life of their mattress through appropriate care? Has the MRC worked with mattress manufacturers to encourage or incentivize design-for-recycling or to streamline designs to use fewer materials? For example, some on our Committee believe that old scrap covers on mattresses are a leading contributor to the amount of unrecyclable mattress material that enters the Program, whereas Latex can be recovered; the Committee questions if the MRC has engaged with manufacturers to learn about their design choices and educate them on the recyclability of particular products. In executing this Program appropriately, it is crucial that source-reduction be an integral part of program operations. The absence of serious source-reduction efforts as reflected in the Annual Report and by extension the Program is inexcusable and must be implemented as soon as possible.

Landfilled Program Material: Although many market factors are beyond the control of the MRC (e.g., China's "National Sword" policy reducing export markets and California's organics diversion mandates flooding wood markets at a time when biomass is becoming less economically viable), there are many ways the MRC can reduce landfilling and incineration of mattress material collected for recycling. The 2017 rates of 19.54% of all mattress material collected by weight under the Program going to landfill and 21.29% being incinerated leaves much room for improvement.

The Committee asks the MRC and CalRecycle to closely monitor the "disposition of materials" (page 34) in subsequent years to determine whether further large increases in this budget item are needed. The amount of mattress material collected for recycling through MRC programs, but nevertheless landfilled or incinerated, is a key metric to measure progress toward greater recycling through development of commodity markets.

Technical comments: 1) Table 5, page 36 needs clarification that the mattresses collected from Solid Waste Facilities (SWF) is included in the "Mattress Recycler" number; the current table indicates inflated Program success; 2) Table 6, page 36 "landfilled" number should be broken out to distinguish mattresses that MRC paid the facility to collect and landfill (due to the mattresses being dirty/contaminated/wet to recycle), and mattresses reported to CalRecycle as landfilled, but not reported to or paid for by MRC. This would provide more data about how many Program mattresses are unable to be recycled, versus the number of mattresses discarded in the entire State of California that cannot be recycled.

Support for Increased R&D Funding: The Committee appreciates the specificity of the R&D line item in the Annual Report and the clarification during the July 9, 2018 Committee meeting by the MRC that the \$54,776 specified on page 47 of the Annual Report was the full amount spent for all the market development activities described on page 39. Prior to this confirmation, we were concerned the priority of market development was severely underfunded and were glad to hear that the budget amount for this category was increased by approximately \$900,000 for the 2019 Program year, though we question if this is enough when 40% of all material collected in 2017 was not recycled or reused, but in fact landfilled or incinerated.

Clarity on Oversight Spending/Enforcement: The DCM Subcommittee appreciated the specificity in the Annual Report disclosing that CalRecycle invoiced MRC \$447,048 for oversight expenses related to the mattress recycling program (page 47). Further specificity would be appreciated as to how



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CalRecycle spent these funds. CalRecycle should provide this information to the MRC along with their invoices, and the MRC should include it in subsequent annual reports. For example, page 63 of the draft report states CalRecycle inspected "randomly selected" retailers, but it does not say how many such inspections were conducted or share the results. Since this was funded with mattress recycling fees collected by the MRC, it should be part of each annual report.

The Committee included this request in our 2017 Report to the MRC (included in the appendices of the 2017 Annual Report) and appreciated learning from the MRC during the Committee's July 9, 2018 meeting that the MRC sought to obtain enforcement information for inclusion, but did not receive data from CalRecycle for inclusion in the 2017 Annual Report. The Committee would like to see the MRC and CalRecycle work together to confirm with the Committee that Program enforcement details and greater clarity on the use of oversight funds to be included in future annual reports.

Expand Material Markets: Some tools for decreasing the amount of material sent to landfill are presented in the MRC's "Recycled Mattress Material Market Assessment," which appears to be a summary of a study sponsored by the MRC and conducted by a university. The 2017 Annual Report does not include information reflecting significant progress in implementing the suggestions listed in that report, but the DCM Subcommittee expects the subsequent annual report (2018) will address at least the following, which we agree seem to be promising opportunities for market development that will lead to increased diversion:

- Sponsorship of research at universities, such as Rutgers and North Carolina State University. The former is testing mixed blended fibers from recycled clothing in geotextile applications, and the latter worked with Carpet America Recovery Effort (CARE) to test recycled carpet fiber in nonwoven fiber applications. MRC sponsorship could establish parallel programs for elements of mattresses now commonly disposed.
- Work with companies, such as Boom Environmental Products, Bonded Logic, and Phoenix Fibers to incorporate increased amounts of post-consumer mattress material into their products. These companies manufacture products such as oil containment booms, silt curtains, and spill containment pallets from post-consumer recycled polyester as well as thermal acoustic insulation from recycled denim. One example of a way to work with them could follow the model of the California Recycling Market Development Zones' (RMDZ) Zone Incentive Fund program. MRC could use R&D funds to finance test runs with recycled feedstock and to help the companies test market these new products.
- Initiate a competitive grant process or contract-based research. The MRC could use the model of CalRecycle's former Tire Product Commercialization Grants or the model of the Sustainable Business Association's (SBA) Small Business Research Innovation Grants to give a wide variety of companies an opportunity to assist with development of new markets for commodities derived from recycled mattresses. Most mattresses recycled in 2017 were purchased before 2010, and similarly, we need to develop markets now for the mattress waste stream of the



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future. The Committee calls for particular attention to materials such as latex, which the Annual Report described as having poor markets despite retailers indicating it is increasingly taking market share from metal box springs. Fortunately, latex is a valuable raw material in virgin form, so there may be opportunities for profitable recovery.

Illegal Dumping Subcommittee (ID Subcommittee) Comments

Abandoned Mattress Initiative: The Committee commends the MRC for the recently launched abandoned mattress initiative described on page 21 of the Annual Report and fully supports the increased incentive to \$15 per mattress. The Committee has expressed concern with the lack of data on illegally dumped mattresses in the past and looks forward to the initiative's success in gathering data about the scope of illegally dumped mattresses in California. Understanding that the initiative is still underway, the Committee recommends that the MRC make an informed evaluation about the overall scope of the illegal dumping issue as a projected quantification of the overall problem is currently missing from the Annual Report.

As discussed at the Advisory Committee meeting on July 9, 2018, the Committee recommends that that MRC consider incentives for organizations that are not registered entities under the Program, such as Boy Scout Troops, but that may be able to collect and report data on illegally dumped mattresses. This type of incentive would be particularly beneficial in rural areas with fewer registered entities.

At the end of page 23, the Annual Report discusses three components the MRC is working on in regards to abandoned mattress management: 1. Promotion of the initiative; 2. Effectiveness; and 3. Alternatives. If not in this Annual Report, it would be helpful for the MRC to outline their perspectives on these three key issues for the 2018 Annual Report, or if they have anything to share now. *Is promotion working? What more can be done? Do we understand enough of the scope of the illegally dumped mattress problem in order to appropriately gauge the overall success of the Program?*

In the Committee's 2017 Report to the MRC (included in the appendices of the 2017 Annual Report), we requested that data provided under the initiative be reported by participant, not by County as was done in the 2016 Annual Report. The Committee appreciates the MRC accepting this request and providing initiative data by participant and thereby providing a more comprehensive view of the collected information.

Comments by the Outreach and Program Marketing Subcommittee (OPM Subcommittee)

Program Participation: There are currently some solid waste facilities and similar sites not participating in the Program because they are reluctant to cease collections of consumer drop-off fees and become a free drop-off site. The Committee understands that current law does not mandate participation in the Program, but we believe that the complications of getting these facilities to participate is a critical component to recognize when reporting on the overall success of the Program. The Committee made this identical remark in our formal comment letter on the 2016



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Annual Report and is disappointed the MRC has failed once again to address these concerns in the 2017 Annual Report. A response by the MRC could include paying for labor costs for participants.

Program Marketing: The Committee recognizes Bye Bye Mattress as the principal public-facing educational platform for the Program. Accordingly, information about all options available to the consumer should be promoted and highlighted, including retailer take-back obligations. At this time, when a Californian visits Bye Bye Mattress the website automatically prompts the consumer to type in their addresses and learn of their closest drop-off point. However, the first and easiest option for the consumer is to vocalize their right to retailer take-back or leverage existing bulky item collection services that exist in some areas. This is especially true for members of the public that are aging, disabled or do not have access to a vehicle for transportation.

Accordingly, there should be a pop-up window – or other intervention – that appears when a consumer is redirected to the California drop-off map with a message akin to, “Wait! Do you have a new mattress being delivered? Your retailer is required to take your old one away!” If a consumer still chooses to coordinate self- disposal of their old mattress, the generated map should distinguish at first blush which free drop-off locations entitle the consumer to the \$3 redemption value (recycling locations) and which do not. Similarly, a notification to “check with your local waste hauler to determine if bulky item collection is available,” should be added to the website.

The Committee also encourages the MRC to expand Program marketing into Google ads and billboards to educate those seeking to purchase a new mattress, as opposed to only target those looking at how to dispose of a mattress online. Unlike other end-of-life programs like California’s Carpet Recycling Program – where contractors typically handle the product at its end of life – consumers typically handle mattresses at their end-of-life and education needs to be available to them through a variety of platforms. Expanding program education beyond what is already in use is particularly critical when noting the rise of “bed in a box” sales, and the absence of retailer take-back obligations for these retailers. For uniquely large generators of used mattresses, like hotels and universities, the Committee recommends that the MRC develop customized educational materials and direct contacts.

Coordination with Retailers: The Committee has heard from several retailers that the MRC’s educational materials have not been received at their location. The Committee was pleased to learn at the July 9, 2018 Committee meeting that the MRC is currently working to identify a direct contact at each mattress retailer. The Committee encourages the MRC to continue building and maintaining relationship with each individual mattress retailer in order to ensure that each has the informational materials necessary to execute their portion of the Program.

Material Customization: The Committee is pleased that several of the MRC’s educational tools are provided in Spanish, but recommends that the MRC work directly with retailers and local government to identify the unique language requirements within California’s diverse population.

For future consumer education radio spots and television advertisements, the Committee recommends that the MRC build-in opportunities for local governments to include particular information about local opportunities like bulky item pick-up availability.



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Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the 2017 Annual Report and 2019 Program Budget. The Advisory Committee is pleased to have the unique opportunity to provide insight and guidance on the Program and we appreciate CalRecycle's consideration of our collective and diverse views.

Respectfully,

Terry McDonald, Chair

St. Vincent de Paul Society of Lane Co., Inc.

Kelly McBee, Vice-Chair

Californians Against Waste

Heidi Sanborn, Secretary

Joanne Brasch (alternate)

California Product Stewardship Council

David Goldstein

Diversion & Commodity Markets Subcommittee Chair
Ventura County

Jim McHargue

Illegal Dumping Subcommittee Chair
Amador County

Rebecca A. Rasmussen

Outreach & Program Marketing Subcommittee Chair
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Don Franco

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Doug Kobold

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Robert McGowan

Pacific Central Region at Mattress Firm Inc.

Veronica Pardo

California Refuse Recycling Council

Tchad Robinson

Blue Marble Materials

Jo Zientek

Santa Clara County



Del Norte Solid Waste Management Authority

1700 State Street, Crescent City, CA 95531

Phone (707) 465-1100 Fax (707) 465-1300

www.recycledelnorte.ca.gov

The Authority's mission is the management of Del Norte County solid waste and recyclable material in an environmentally sound, cost effective, efficient and safe manner while ensuring 100% regulatory compliance with law.

July 18, 2018

California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery
Scott Smithline – Director
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95812-4025

SUBJECT: Comments on MRC 2017 Annual Report and Proposed 2019 MRC Budget

Director Smithline:

SB 254 (Hancock) was enacted in 2013 and aims to reduce illegal dumping, increase recycling, and substantially reduce public agency costs for the end-of-use management of used mattresses. The legislation requires industry to create a statewide recycling program to increase the recovery and recycling of mattresses at their end-of-use. The Program is administered by the Mattress Recycling Council (MRC) and funded through a \$10.50 recycling fee collected from consumers at point-of-sale when a mattress or box spring is purchased. Since 2016, Californians have paid an extra fee for each mattress and box spring to establish and support recycling of those items. The Del Norte County Transfer Station accepts mattresses for disposal on a daily basis for a charge of \$10.17 plus the weight charge - so a 100 pound mattress would cost \$17.92 to dispose.

Del Norte's experience with MRC's programs:

MRC was unwilling to pay the cost per mattress required under our agency's pre-existing Transfer Operations Agreement with Hambro/WSG, as it exceeded the amount MRC collected per mattress for this program. To their credit, Liz Wagner of MRC staff proposed periodic one-day collection events for mattresses in Del Norte, for which MRC provides trailers and shipping and pay transfer station operations costs associated with loading mattresses on that day. During these MRC events, Del Norte residents can bring up to four mattresses or box springs for no charge. For each 'free' mattress event, MRC pays our operations contractor (Hambro/WSG or HWSG) an amount per mattress that is less than the amount HWSG would receive on a daily basis. So this weekly service reduces HWSG's (and the Authority's) revenue, and creates an incentive for customers to hold onto their mattresses for the next event. Still, considering that customers are required to pay in advance for having some kind of access to mattress recycling, both Authority and HWSG support continuing this program as a nominal access for Del Norte residents to some kind of 'free mattress recycling dropoff.' Still, it does not seem reasonable that MRC be allowed to collect a fee for services that our agency and contractor provide at a loss.



MRC successfully negotiated a half-day per week free mattress collection at the Crescent City office of Humboldt Moving and Storage (9AM – 1 PM every Wednesday) that started on 02 May 2018, during which time Del Norte residents can bring up to six mattresses or box springs for recycling.

Based on our County's proportion of California's population, our staff estimates that approximately 2,700 mattresses sold in Del Norte last year, yielding revenues of over \$28,000 to the MRC from Del Norte County. In return for this revenue, MRC helped support **three** days of mattress collection events in Del Norte County in 2017, managing 950 mattresses and box springs – about one third of the annual total number of mattresses or box springs received at the Del Norte County Transfer Station. MRC and Authority staff generally do not schedule such events during the wettest months of the year as mattresses that are too wet are not recyclable.

During the most recent mattress recycling event at the Del Norte County Transfer Station on June 16th, 174 mattresses were collected compared to 399 on March 17th, and 321 on September 23rd. At the time, Authority staff were presuming that the primary reason for the fewer numbers of mattresses was the availability of the weekly no-cost mattress drop-off at Humboldt Moving and Storage.

Managers at Humboldt Moving & Storage report that though they seem to be collecting more mattresses each Wednesday, as of the first week in July, they had received a total of just 45 mattresses since May. Presuming this is accurate, the total quantity of mattresses collected under MRC programs actually decreased during this past quarter - from 399 in March to less than $(174+45=)$ 219 in June. For comparison, the Del Norte County Transfer Station received an additional 141 mattress units during June from customers who paid for mattress disposal. Furthermore, since Humboldt Moving & Storage began accepting mattresses for free on Wednesday mornings, customers paid to dispose 53 units on Wednesdays at the DNC Transfer Station. In other words, since the half-day, once-a-week free mattress drop-off program began at Humboldt Moving & Storage, **fewer** mattresses have been received for no-charge recycling on Wednesdays than have been disposed for a fee at the Del Norte County Transfer Station on those same days.

A rural perspective on this program and suggestions for improvement:

At the regular meeting of the Del Norte Solid Waste Management Authority Board yesterday, by consensus the Board directed staff to prepare a letter to express the following:

- As the MRC advance recycling fee of \$10.50 is charged for every mattress or box spring sold by Del Norte retail locations, there should be at least one location in Del Norte County that accepts mattresses and box springs for recycling for no charge at least five days per week and not less than 40 hours per week. Until this level of convenience is achieved in every California county that has not opted out of the program, our agency opposes any reduction in the per-mattress advanced recycling fee. Reducing fees while underproviding service is not appropriate.
- The cost issue is fundamental, as MRC's program to compensate for the costs of collecting illegally dumped mattresses (at \$10/unit) does not cover the costs for disposing of each unit, let alone the cost of collection, disposal and documentation.

- Advertising expenses alone are a poor assessment of the effectiveness of the advertising effort. In Del Norte, MRC staff insisted on keeping with their 'model' ad, which essentially is a crude map with a pin mark indicating the recycling location. For our rural community with one recycling location, MRC wanted to use a County map including the name of a native American massacre and cemetery, but not the names of the current population centers. MRC advertising staff were not very responsive to these concerns initially, but did eventually change the ad. Though the ad was in color (and thus more expensive), staff felt it could be improved significantly if MRC advertising staff were more attentive to local input. We suspect similar under-performing ads were deployed in other communities.
- Our agency supports all ways to improve the convenience of this program building on our existing programs. For example, Recology Del Norte collects two bulky items for no charge per year from their collection customers. It would be great if MRC could provide a trailer to Recology so mattresses and box springs collected by Recology could be recycled under this program.
- Until a 5-day a week, 40 hours/week no-cost drop-off location can be established in each County, MRC should be required to advertise using radio and newspapers at least six times per year that retailers selling and delivering mattresses are required to collect old program units as the new ones are delivered.
- At this time, our elected officials are under the impression that MRC is being allowed to collect fees while underdelivering on the programs that should be supported by these fees. We feel this underperformance is especially prevalent in rural areas.
- On page 41, the 2017 MRC annual report incorrectly identifies Del Norte County as urban. With a population of under 30,000 and an area of over 1000 square miles, we maintain that we are rural, and have been recognized by CalRecycle as such. In California, MRC's definition of rural should match that of CalRecycle.

Sincerely,



Tedd Ward – Director

Del Norte Solid Waste Management Authority

cc: Robin Trainer, Mattress Recycling Council

