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February 4, 2020

Senate Committee on Labor and Business
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE, Room 347
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Knopp, and Members of the Committee:

The Association of Oregon Recyclers (AOR) is a trade association focused on advancing waste prevention and recycling in Oregon.

If passed, SB1564 would establish a product stewardship program for mattresses. AOR will support this bill if it is amended to include more stringent reporting, transparency, accountability and enforcement provisions and hope the planned for amendments will do this.

There is currently no convenient way for most people to recycle their old mattresses. So, most mattresses end up in landfills or energy recovery facilities, where their bulk and relative flexibility make them difficult to handle. In the worst case scenario, mattresses are illegally dumped in the environment. As a result, mattresses are expensive for local governments (and, therefore, taxpayers) to manage.

Under product stewardship, the makers of products share in the responsibility for properly managing their products' leftovers. Product stewardship programs in Oregon for electronic waste and paint have been beneficial. However, we recognize that "one size does not fit all." A stewardship program for mattresses will need to reflect the nature of the industries that manufacture them.

In the United States there are currently three states that are benefiting from product stewardship laws for mattresses. Since the first program began in 2015 in Connecticut, the three programs have recycled more than three million mattress and diverted more than 136 million pounds of material from disposal and in California more than 23,700 illegally dumped mattresses were collected. While there have been many positive benefits, the product stewardship laws in these states have also demonstrated how critical strict reporting and enforcement standards are for successful implementation. Stronger requirements will ensure the mattresses are managed properly and that underserved population living in multifamily communities benefit from the policy. That is why AOR urges the legislature to pass SB1564 if it is amended to include greater transparency and accountability standards.

Sincerely,



Alison Briggs-Ungerer
Chair, Association of Oregon Recyclers