

January 28, 2021

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Beyer and Members of the Committee:

The Association of Oregon Recyclers (AOR) is a 501(c)6 committed to supporting policies that promote high-quality recycling and composting, thoughtful consumption, and producer responsibility. We believe the producers that manufacture and sell products to Oregonians should have a role in how products are managed at the end of their usable life. Equity, community partnerships and community restoration are also centered in our guiding principles because we believe the reuse, repair and recycling economy should benefit everyone, including communities of color and rural areas. Our principles around equity and the environment are why *AOR supports SB 570 and believes it is a critical piece of legislation in the 2021 legislative session.*

There is currently no convenient way for most people to recycle or throw away their old mattresses. Most mattresses sold in Oregon 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 difficult and expensive to manage and we believe mattress producers should be responsible for some of those the burdens and costs their products create. This stewardship program created by SB 570 will help build recycling infrastructure for mattresses that is currently lacking in our state. Once disassembled, up to 85 percent of a typical mattress is recyclable. The metal, foam, cotton and wood used to make a mattress are valuable materials and can be used to make new products. SB 570 will help leverage the financial resources needed to expand mattress processing throughout our state.

There are currently three states that benefit from product stewardship laws for mattresses. Since the first program began in 2015 in Connecticut, collectively the three programs have recycled more than three million mattresses and diverted more than 136 million pounds of material from disposal. In California more than 23,700 illegally dumped mattresses were collected in one year. 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. Most mattresses contain chemicals (flame retardants, for example) that are harmful when released into the environment. Strong regulatory requirements will ensure the mattresses are handled responsibly and do not have a negative health impacts on the workers handling and processing them, or on surrounding communities. When a similar mattress bill was introduced in Oregon's 2020 Legislative session, AOR was concerned the policy did not include sufficient transparency and accountability standards. We are pleased SB 570 includes detailed reporting requirements and we believe without these enforcement provisions, this bill would have unintended consequences.

AOR believes SB 570 is the type of policy we need to harness the environmental and economic value of mattresses by making recycling more convenient and accessible to everyone. We urge you to move it forward.

Sincerely,

Kristin Leichner
Chair, Association of Oregon Recyclers

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