



Oregon

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DATE: January 26, 2021

TO: Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

FROM: Abby Boudouris, Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: SB 570 of 2021 Session

SB 570 uses a product stewardship model to establish a statewide recycling program for mattresses. The program would be similar to Oregon's successful Electronics and Paint Product Stewardship Programs, which were established in 2007 and 2009 respectively. In addition, the 2019 legislature passed HB 3273 establishing a product stewardship program for the safe disposal of unused medications in Oregon with statewide collection becoming available later this year. Product stewardship programs for mattresses operate in California, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.

Product stewardship is an environmental management strategy for minimizing a product's environmental, health, safety and social impacts throughout all stages of the product's life. Product stewardship shifts the primary responsibility for minimizing these impacts to producers because as the designer of the products, they have the greatest ability to reduce impacts across the products entire life cycle and are in the best position to know the contents of the products and the risks associated with improper end-of-life management. Suppliers, retailers and consumers also play a role ensuring the product is managed properly.

Common components of a products stewardship law include requirements for manufacturers to establish and operate a convenient statewide system, ensure the product is managed in an environmentally sound manner at end-of-life, ensure the program is funded, and report annually on the success of the program. Operationally, the material collection and end-of-life management system is usually managed by one or more stewardship organizations operating on behalf of the manufacturers. SB 570 includes all of these elements and proposes a stewardship organization model.

Based on the 2016-2017 DEQ waste composition study, over 15,000 tons of mattresses are disposed of annually, which represents 0.5% of the disposed municipal waste stream. According to a report prepared by the Cascade Alliance in 2017 on the state of the mattress recycling industry, mattresses are a challenge for landfills because they "don't compact well, take up a lot of space, create flammable air pockets, and the springs get tangled in the bulldozer compacting equipment, often damaging it. Mattresses contain non-biodegradable synthetic foam and fibers, plus hazardous flame retardant chemicals, which can leach into drinking water." Also according to the report, once disassembled, over 85 percent of the components of a mattress can be recycled. "Recycling one mattress saves 23 cubic feet of landfill space and repurposes up to 65 pounds of materials." A stewardship organization's management of mattress material, as proposed in SB 570, would prioritize recycling and reduce these impacts.

DEQ's role in the program proposed in SB 570 would be to provide oversight of the stewardship organization, including review and approval of submitted plans, review of substantive program changes and annual reports. DEQ has no position on the bill.

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