



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

## Department of Environmental Quality

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**DATE:** February 1, 2021

**TO:** Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

**FROM:** Abby Boudouris, Legislative Analyst

**SUBJECT:** SB 1576 of 2022 Session

SB 1576 uses a product stewardship model to establish a statewide recycling program for mattresses. The program would be similar to Oregon's successful Electronics, Paint, and Drug Take-Back Product Stewardship Programs, which were established in 2007, 2009, and 2019, respectively. 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 producers to establish and operate a convenient statewide system for collection of products; ensure that collected products are 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 producers. SB 1576 includes all 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." The report also notes that up to 85 percent of the components of a dissembled mattress can be recycled and that 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 1576, would prioritize recycling and reduce these impacts.

DEQ's role in the program proposed in SB 1576 would be to provide oversight of the stewardship organization, including review and approval of submitted plans, review of substantive program changes and annual reports.

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