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Contact: Julia McDowell
work: (703) 888-4146
cell: (703) 582-0428
jmcowell@williamswhittle.com

Statewide Mattress Recycling Program Debuts In California

Will Increase Recycling of Discarded Mattresses

ALEXANDRIA, VA – Tomorrow, California becomes the second state in the nation with a statewide recycling program for used mattresses and box springs. The program, known as Bye Bye Mattress, allows California residents to drop-off used mattresses at participating collection sites and recycling facilities for free. California residents can find their nearest participating collection site or recycling facility at www.byebyemattress.com.

Bye Bye Mattress is administered by the Mattress Recycling Council (MRC), a non-profit organization created by the mattress industry to develop and manage the recycling program mandated by law in 2013. "This program is a cost-effective solution to a long-term problem," said Ryan Trainer, president of MRC. "We developed California's program to increase the recycling of used mattress materials by leveraging the existing waste collection infrastructure." To date, the Program has over 40 solid waste facilities in the program as designated collection locations and many more are expected to join in early 2016. MRC is also working with mattress retailers, hotels, universities, healthcare facilities and other public and private entities in California to divert mattresses from the solid waste stream.

"The implementation of this mattress recycling program means discarded mattresses will be recycled in an environmentally sound manner, creating California jobs and resulting in cost savings for municipalities," said Scott Smithline, director of CalRecycle. "This program mirrors similar programs being implemented in other states. We recognize the Mattress Recycling Council for their commitment to the success of this program and their leadership in getting this law passed."

The program is funded through an \$11 recycling fee that is collected when a mattress or box spring is sold to California consumers. Consumers will notice this fee as a separate line item on their receipt. The fee is used to pay for transporting and recycling the discarded mattresses.

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Numerous stakeholders in the program, including government officials, municipal and solid waste representatives and the mattress industry, will gather in Sacramento and Los Angeles in early January to commemorate the launch of the program.

Recycling Facts

Each year, 35 to 40 million new mattresses and box springs are sold in the United States, and at least 15 to 20 million used mattresses and box springs are discarded.

More than 80% of a used mattress' components can be recycled —the metal springs, foam, wood and fibers — and made into new useful products. For example:

- The steel springs are recycled as metal scrap and can be melted and used to make new appliances, building materials and other steel products.
- The foam can be turned into carpet underlayment or animal bed padding.
- The wooden frames can be shredded to produce landscaping mulch.
- The cotton and other fiber can be used in industrial oil filters and other textile applications.

The Recycling Process

Most recyclers currently use the following process to dismantle a mattress:

1. The top mattress layer (including the outer fabric) is cut, peeled and separated from the mattress' interior materials (which can include fiber, polyurethane or latex foam and steel springs).
2. The interior materials are pulled apart and separated by type.
3. Foam, fiber and other soft commodities are baled and compressed for transport to scrap dealers or companies that will consume them to make new products.
4. Metal springs from mattresses and box springs are extracted and sent to scrap recyclers that will sell them to steel mills and foundries.
5. Wood is chipped or shredded.

About Mattress Recycling Council

The Mattress Recycling Council is a non-profit organization formed by the mattress industry to operate recycling programs in states which have enacted mattress recycling laws – Connecticut, California and Rhode Island. Each state's program will be funded by a recycling fee that is collected when a mattress or box spring is sold. The fees pay for the transportation and recycling of the mattresses. To learn more, go to www.mattressrecyclingcouncil.org.

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