

California's Textile Recycling Bill Re-Introduced With Industry Input



CALIFORNIA IS ONE STEP CLOSER TO BECOMING THE FIRST U.S. STATE WITH A TEXTILE EPR. WOKEPHOTO17 / GETTY IMAGES

California's statewide textile recycling proposal is officially back in play.

A little over a year after it was first introduced, SB 707, rebranded as the Responsible Textile Recovery Act, has been "restructured and refined" to include input and new language from textile and apparel industry stakeholders as well as sortation and recycling experts.

Now, it's headed to the Assembly Committee of Natural Resources for a hearing on July 1.

Proposed by State Senator Josh Newman last March, the bill aims to make producers of fabrics and clothing sold within the Golden State liable for the fate of their waste, which might otherwise be destined for landfills.

If signed into law, it would mandate that the industry fund an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program for discarded

garments and textiles. Under the platform, a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) would manage the collection, sortation and recycling of the recovered goods.

Fanfare over the first-of-its-kind proposal led to its passage on the Senate floor within months of its 2023 debut, but some members of the textile and apparel sector were left with more questions than answers about how such an ambitious program would be structured—and who would ultimately be responsible for the cost and resources required to get it up and running.

Small California businesses worried they would bear the cost of compliance, as the bill had no de minimis standard for size or revenue. Meanwhile, the roster of covered products was both broad and vague. The bill included no mechanism to force foreign retailers selling goods to consumers in the state to pay into the program. And perhaps most importantly, there was no proof of concept.

As such, the textile EPR program was pulled from consideration last July and extended into a two-year bill to allow for more stakeholder engagement.

Released publicly this week, the bill's updated text attempts to clarify some uncertainties. It pinpoints the products covered by the legislation—apparel products like shirts, pants, dresses, undergarments, everyday workwear and accessories like bags—and excludes textile articles like mattresses and carpets.

It also includes a more streamlined definition of the term “producers”—an earlier point of confusion and contention, as it refers to the parties that will ultimately bear the responsibility of funding the program.

Under the 2.0 version of SB 707, a producer is defined as a person who manufactures a covered product and who owns, or is the licensee of, the brand or trademark under which the good is sold, offered for sale or distributed for sale in California.

In the event that no person within the state fits that bill, the responsibility of funding the textile EPR falls to the owner of the brand or trademark under which a covered product is sold or imported into the state, or the brand's licensee. In the absence of such a party, the importer of the product for sale or distribution becomes responsible, and if no such person can be named, the producer is the distributor, retailer or wholesaler who sells the product within California or into the state from somewhere outside of it.

Notably, the term “producer” doesn't cover vendors that sell only secondhand apparel or textile products. It also excludes sellers with less than \$1 million in annual global sales, establishing a de minimis standard.

Online marketplaces both foreign and domestic will also be held to account for their contributions to California's apparel and textile economy.

Each year, platforms like Amazon, eBay, Temu and Shein will be required to notify the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery and the established PRO of third-party sellers that have made more than \$1 million in sales of covered textile and apparel items. Marketplaces will also be responsible for informing their independent vendors about the requirements of the California law.

All producers of covered products will be compelled to form and join a PRO under the law. By Jan. 1, 2026, the governing body of the PRO must submit an application to the department describing its activities and how it meets the requirements laid out in the legislation. The department will approve the PRO by March 1 of that year, and all producers of covered products will be required to join by July 1.

Textiles are the fifth most common material found in California landfills, and to date, the burden of managing textile and apparel waste has been thrust upon thrifts like Goodwill and the Salvation Army. The proposal will funnel capital into those activities, which will support the chosen PRO, along with businesses dealing in services like repair and cleaning that could render discarded items useful again.

With proponents and sponsors ranging from industry trade groups to NGOs, brands, recyclers, city governments and waste management providers, the revolutionary proposal sets national precedents. If passed, the Responsible Textile Recovery Act would establish the first textile-focused EPR in the country.

Link

<https://sourcingjournal.com/sustainability/sustainability-news/california-responsible-textile-recovery-act-bill-recycling-apparel-epr-sb-707-515921/>

Provided by Sourcing Journal

*(*Subscription may be required to open this article online.)*

Bangladesh May Face ‘Significant Threats’ of PFAS Exposure Due to Apparel Sector



A NEW STUDY EXAMINES PFAS LEVELS IN SURFACE AND TAP WATER IN BANGLADESH. ESDO / IPEN

The “forever chemicals” have contaminated Bangladesh’s surface and tap water, according to research from the Environment and Social Development Organization (ESDO), a Bangladesh-based NGO and research body, and IPEN, a collective of 600 public interest groups in developing nations concerned with chemical and waste policies.

The research partners tested and analyzed water from 31 rivers and lakes from communities located near textile manufacturing hubs that produce clothing for brands like Benetton, C&A, Calvin Klein, H&M, Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury’s and Zara.

PFAS chemicals were found in 27 of the 31 surface water samples (87 percent), and in 18 of those samples (58 percent), researchers discovered chemicals that have been listed for

global elimination under the Stockholm Convention. Nineteen samples representing 61 percent of the total lot tested showed PFAS levels above proposed EU regulatory limits for surface water.

Water samples taken close to textile-producing facilities contained higher concentrations of PFAS, “adding to the evidence that the textiles industry may be a significant source of PFAS water pollution,” the study found. For example, two of the waterways tested were downstream and upstream from the country’s Export Processing Zones in Dhaka and Adamjee, and the downstream samples showed higher PFAS concentrations, reinforcing the idea that the chemicals are flowing out of these facilities at a dangerous rate.

Several surface water samples showed alarmingly high PFAS concentrations, with one containing more than 310 times the proposed EU regulatory limit.

The groups also tested four tap water samples, which yielded disturbing results. Analysis indicated PFAS present in three out of the four samples taken at levels beyond the U.S. PFOA regulatory limit.

Bangladesh does not currently have its own regulatory framework for PFAS, but that doesn't mean natural resource contamination isn't a danger to its residents. The compounds, which scientists fear are making their way into groundwater and the food supply, have been linked to negative impacts to fertility and fetal development.

A 2022 study showed that chronic exposure in children led to elevated blood cholesterol levels, lipid imbalances that can cause cardiovascular disease, lower birth weights and reduced antibody response to some infections and vaccines. PFOS, a chemical under the PFAS umbrella, has been tied to liver damage, while PFOA, another member of the PFAS family, has been fingered for causing cancer.

It's hard to deny that the apparel and textile sector is largely responsible for the spread of the toxic inputs, as it accounts for 50 percent of total global PFAS use and is the second largest PFAS emissions contributor on Earth.

Bangladesh may be a particularly high-risk market, given that ready-made garment (RMG) production is an essential driver of the nation's economy. The industry accounts for 83 percent of Bangladesh's total exports, according to the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and

Exporters Association (BGMEA). About four million workers are employed at 3,500 factories across the country, indicating a high probability of direct exposure to PFAS.

Residents that don't toil in factories are not necessarily safe from that exposure. Five clothing items for men, women and children purchased from retailers in Bangladesh were tested, and all were found to contain PFAS, with one garment containing suspected carcinogen PFOA.

The results of the research "add to the evidence that the textiles industry may be a significant source of PFAS water pollution, not only posing threats of PFAS exposures to residents of Bangladesh through water, food, and clothing, but also more widely due to their properties as global pollutants," the study authors wrote.

"Based on the results of this study, ESDO and IPEN are calling on the textiles industry to phase out the use of PFAS," they added. Policymakers also have a major role to play, as regulation is needed to institute penalties for employing the chemicals. Finally, the onus is also on the "brand-name companies" that have "tremendous market influence" to demand products free from PFAS, they wrote.

Link

<https://sourcingjournal.com/sustainability/sustainability-news/bangladesh-pfas-exposure-apparel-textiles-production-water-contamination-512620/>

Provided by Sourcing Journal

(*Subscription may be required to open this article online.)

China finalising new hazardous chemical legislation

Government review scheduled for 2024



©kittisak stock.adobe.com

China is in the final stages of drafting a new law governing hazardous chemicals safety.

The proposed Law on the Safety of Hazardous Chemicals, which was drafted by the Ministry of Emergency Management (MEM), is included in the State Council's 2024 Legislative Workplan, published on 9 May.

According to the plan, the law will be submitted this year to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for deliberation. It has already gone through several consultations and was originally expected to be published in 2021, replacing Decree 591 Regulations on Safe Management of Hazardous Chemicals, which regulates the production, import, storage and transportation of hazardous substances in the country.

The workplan also highlighted preparations for establishing regulations on the environmental risk management of chemical substances.

The MEM issued in late April its 2024 Special Law Enforcement Inspection Workplan, under which it intends to inspect companies producing or using 28 specified hazardous chemicals.

Link

<https://product.enhesa.com/1084373/china-finalising-new-hazardous-chemical-legislation>

Provided By Chemical Watch

*(*Subscription may be required to open this article online.)*