

California To Ban The Sale And Use Of Single-Use Propane Cylinders, For Good Reason

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California has become the first state to ban the sale of single-use propane cylinders. Governor Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill 1280 into law, which mandates that all one-pound propane canisters sold in California must be refillable or reusable beginning January 1, 2028. The bill, introduced by Senator John Laird of Santa Cruz, is designed to promote sustainable outdoor recreation and alleviate the environmental impact caused by disposable propane canisters. So, what does that mean for us overlanders? Essentially, after the initial purchase of an appropriate cylinder and adapter, this law might actually save us money.



The ubiquitous Coleman one-pound (16-ounce) All-Purpose Propane cylinder (and others like it) is not designed to be refillable and may require an upgrade if Coleman intends to continue to sell this cylinder in California. These canisters are intended for single use and disposal according to local recycling or hazardous waste guidelines. Some aftermarket refill kits allow refilling these cylinders, but refilling non-refillable containers can be dangerous and may void warranties or violate regulations.



The solution is a refillable cylinder such as the Flame King refillable one-pound propane tanks (\$30 each) certified by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). They are specifically designed for safe refilling and comply with DOT-39 specifications for refillable propane cylinders. This certification ensures they meet safety standards for transport, refilling, and repeated use, making them a safer alternative to disposable one-pound cylinders. [The Flame King Eco-Friendly one-pound Refillable Reusable Propane Cylinder + Refill Kit](#) is a mere \$65 and includes a one-pound cylinder, cylinder cap, 2mm (5/64”) Allen key, refill adapter, and refill stand. You will need to have your own large gas cylinder to refill the Flame King cylinders, but it won't be long before you have saved a fair amount of camping money if you use the one-pound cylinders regularly.

But why ban single-use, one-pound cylinders? Governor Newsom's signing of SB 1280 represents a substantial step toward waste reduction in the state. The measure will lessen the financial and operational burdens on parks, beaches, material recovery facilities, and local governments, all of which have struggled to deal with the proliferation of single-use propane canisters. Every year, 40 to 60 million single-use, one-pound propane cylinders are sold across the United States. Given that California accounts for over 10 percent of the national population, approximately 4 to 7 million of these cylinders are purchased annually within the state.





Disposing these canisters poses a significant challenge for local jurisdictions, with disposal costs running as high as \$65 per cylinder (yes, you read that correctly) due to the specialized equipment and labor required. Unlike larger propane tanks that have always been designed to be refillable, these one-pound canisters are single-use products, contributing disproportionately to waste management issues.

In addition to their environmental impact, single-use propane canisters present safety hazards. Improper disposal or recycling can lead to potentially dangerous situations, particularly when canisters are sent to Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs). The residual propane in these cylinders poses an explosion risk, jeopardizing the safety of workers and the integrity of machinery at these facilities. To safely process these canisters, each one must be evacuated and punctured using specialized tools. This laborious and costly step adds to the environmental and financial burden of these products.



California's ban on single-use propane canisters aligns with broader trends across the United States, where lawmakers and environmental groups are increasingly focusing on waste reduction and developing a circular economy. Similar initiatives have already taken root in

states like Vermont, which has also enacted product stewardship laws targeting disposable propane cylinders. California's leadership in this area is particularly impactful due to the scale of its propane market—the largest in the country, with an estimated annual consumption of 535 million gallons.