

California Senator Blakespear Introduces Marine Flare Producer Responsibility Act

by Danielle Doyle | Feb 16, 2024

California Blazes the Trail with Groundbreaking Expired Marine Flare Recycling Legislation. Other States Are Watching.

SB 1066 will solve the marine flare management crisis for boaters while protecting California's water quality

Press Release from the National Stewardship Action Council:

SACRAMENTO, Feb 9, 2024 — Senator Catherine Blakespear (D-38) introduced [SB 1066: The Marine Flare Producer Responsibility Act](#). Sponsored by the National Stewardship Action Council (NSAC), SB 1066 will establish Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for pyrotechnic marine flares, a first of its kind in the United States.

“Boaters love the water and want to protect it from pollution,” Sen. Blakespear said. “Properly disposing of unwanted marine flares, which can contain toxic perchlorate and expire approximately every three years, should be as convenient as it is to purchase them. SB 1066 establishes a way to do that.”

An estimated 174,000 outdated flares are generated each year by recreational vessels in California. While considered household hazardous waste (HHW) at EOL, most HHW facilities in California are unable to accept unwanted marine flares due to their not having permits or equipment to safely handle explosives, as well as the exorbitant costs to properly manage them since they must be shipped out-of-state for proper disposal.

“Historically, the costs to manage unwanted marine flares have been socialized by every ratepayer, whether they own and operate a boat or not.” said Courtney Scott, Household Hazardous Waste Program Manager for Zero Waste Sonoma. “In 2023, it cost an estimated \$185 to properly dispose of one unwanted marine flare, which can be purchased new for approximately \$13.”

SB 1066 will require producers of marine flares to fund and operate a convenient collection system to manage expired or unwanted flares, shifting the costs of managing this product from our cities and counties – and ultimately local ratepayers – to the producers/users.

Jordan Wells, Director of Advocacy and Communications at NSAC shared, “Pyrotechnic marine flares contain toxic metals and pollutants that can negatively impact water quality and human

health. While we encourage boaters to use the reusable, electronic alternative, we must also ensure that the marine flares being sold into the California marketplace today are being properly managed at EOL." "Currently, it is virtually impossible for boaters to properly dispose of expired boating distress flares — which represent a real safety threat as they deteriorate, but they can be purchased quite conveniently. We thank Senator Blakespear for her leadership in making the lives of responsible boaters easier." said Ann Kinner, San Diego Resident, 40-year boat owner, licensed professional mariner, and Owner of Sea Breeze Books and Charts.

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info@siriussignal.com
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