

Paint

The Problem

Consumers often buy more paint than they need. The U.S. EPA [estimates](#) that 10% of paint sold becomes waste. It is the single largest waste stream managed by local government household hazardous waste (HHW) programs. In 2008 it cost California municipalities [\\$27 million dollars](#) to manage the nearly 2 million gallons of leftover paint that was disposed.

Unused paint poses challenges because it is classified as hazardous waste, which makes disposal costly and resource intensive. When not properly managed, leftover paint can harm the environment, contaminating soil and water. However, leftover paint has substantial reuse potential. High-quality, unused paint can often be reprocessed and used again, reducing waste and conserving resources.

The Solution: Policy and Legislation for Paint in California

Stewardship SpectrumSM **Funding and Structures Vary Widely**



The image above illustrates the **Stewardship Spectrum**, which highlights the range of funding and structural models for product stewardship programs. The spectrum emphasizes how responsibility for funding stewardship programs can vary widely between producers and consumers. The solution for paint lands on the consumer responsibility end of the spectrum due to the visible fee being charged to consumers at the point of sale.

AB 1343 (Huffman) – Enacted in 2010

As a result of three years of hard work led by the California Product Stewardship Council, California became the first state in the nation with a permanent paint stewardship program. AB 1343 (Huffman), sponsored by Californians Against Waste, established a producer-financed, designed, and managed post-consumer paint recovery system.

The program is operated by PaintCare, a IRS 501 C(3) nonprofit organization created by the paint industry to fulfill the requirements of the law. It facilitates the collection, recycling, and proper disposal of unused

architectural paint, ensuring that leftover paint is handled responsibly and diverted from landfills. This program now has over 800 [collection sites](#) throughout the state. In [FY2020](#), PaintCare collected over 3.5 million gallons of postconsumer paint and diverted 95% of that from landfill.

[Click Here to Read CPSC's Comment Letter on PaintCare's 5 year Annual Report 12/11/17](#)

AB 1526 (Assembly Committee on Natural Resources) – Enacted in 2023

In 2023, California passed AB 1526, authored by the Committee on Natural Resources. This law removes the exemption that previously excluded aerosol spray paints from the architectural paint recovery program and adds these products for to the program collection, recycling, and proper disposal, while also adding these products to the visible fee part of the program.

By expanding the scope of program requirements, AB 1526 increases consumer access to recycling opportunities, reduces environmental pollution, and promotes a more circular approach to paint product management.

SB 1143 (Allen) – Enacted 2024

In 2024, California passed SB 1143, authored by Senator Ben Allen, to expand the state's paint recovery program. This legislation broadens the scope of the program to include additional non-industrial coatings products.

By expanding the range of products covered, this law increases recycling options and reduces the environmental impact of improperly disposed coatings. Adding these products to the program, funded by visible fees charged at the point of sale, adds millions of gallons of other paint related products that are diverted from landfills annually. SB 1143 ensures that California continues to lead in reducing waste and promoting sustainable product stewardship.

Research & Relevant Articles

- [States' Waste Paint Problem Becomes a Solution for Recyclers, Retailers](#)– Waste 360 7/5/18
- [PaintCare California Hits 5-year milestone CA Households and Businesses Recycle Nearly 12 Million Gal](#)– Santa Monica Mirror 10/19/17
- [Paint Stewardship and Counties: Examining product stewardship and paint recycling efforts in California, Minnesota and Oregon](#) – 10/2015
- [AB 1343 Architectural Paint Recovery Act – Adopted 9/28/2010](#)

Links

- [CalRecycle's Paint Webpage](#)
- [PaintCare California Program](#)
- Green Seal Certified Recycled-Content Latex Paint
 - [Acrylatex Coatings & Recycling, Inc.](#)
 - [Amazon Environmental](#)
 - [Visions Paint Recycling, Inc.](#)