



California is one step closer to tackling fashion waste

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The Responsible Textile Recovery Act is one signature away from becoming a big win against waste for the US

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Kathryn Horvath
Zero Waste Campaign Associate,
WashPIRG

Introduced by California State Senator Josh Newman, [The Responsible Textile Recovery Act \(SB 707\)](#) has successfully advanced through California's legislature and is now waiting for Governor Newsom's signature. The bill would require clothing companies operating in California to create and fund a program to help clothing get reused, repaired, and recycled. This aims to tackle our overarching problem of waste and overproduction in the fashion industry.



The problem is simple: We are producing more clothing than people can wear, and unfortunately much of it ends up in our landfills. The fashion industry is the [fastest growing waste stream in the US](#), and according to the EPA, only [15% of textiles are actually recycled](#). The Responsible Textile Recovery Act would give many of these clothing items a second chance, whether they are repaired, resold, or recycled into new materials.

Our serious waste problem is largely driven by [fast fashion](#), a type of fashion that produces cheap, trendy clothing for low cost. These items don't last long, and they're not intended to. Companies aren't making clothing that's built to last in order to encourage customers to keep buying more and more.



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But what happens after you toss that old shirt in the trash? Who pays to manage and dispose of that textile waste? Us, the consumers and taxpayers.

Producers should be held accountable for their waste

In our current system, manufacturers have no incentive to minimize the waste they create - they are only incentivized to grow their profits. But if The Responsible Textile Recovery Act is signed into law, companies- not ratepayers and taxpayers- will be held financially responsible for what happens to their products after they're used.

There's a name for this type of policy: "[Extended Producer Responsibility](#)." Across the country, programs that make producers responsible for their waste have successfully diverted waste from landfills and saved taxpayers money in the process. There are already [many bills](#) in place for things like electronics, plastic packaging and mattresses, but The Responsible Textile Recovery Act would be the first in the nation to cover textile waste. This cost shift will hopefully encourage textile companies to make stuff that's built to last and produce less overall.

California should take the lead

California has the [fifth largest economy](#) in the world and is often seen as a leader in the US on environmental issues. The state is also a hot spot for fashion as Los Angeles and Hollywood house some of the most

famous celebrities, designers and influencers. If signed into law, this would be a big win that could have ripple effects across the country, and show everyone that waste is out of fashion.

“To protect public health and the environment, we need to move toward a circular system that encourages big companies to make less and better quality clothing that can be repurposed, reused, repaired or recycled and prevents unnecessary waste. California’s new textile bill is one step towards that future, and we hope Governor Newsom signs it into law,” said Kathryn Horvath, Waste is Out of Fashion Campaign Associate with PIRG.

Governor Newsom has until September 30th to sign the bill. If you are a Californian who wants to see your state reduce fashion waste, you take action by sending an email to Governor Newsom urging him to sign SB707 into law.

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AUTHORS

Kathryn Horvath

Zero Waste Campaign Associate, WashPIRG

As the Zero Waste Campaign Associate with WashPIRG, Kathryn is working on our Waste is Out of Fashion campaign. Kathryn lives near her family in Seattle where she enjoys exploring the beautiful Pacific Northwest through skiing, kayaking and practicing her photography.

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