



**SECONDARY MATERIALS®
AND RECYCLED TEXTILES**

The Association of Wiping Materials, Used Clothing and Fiber Industries

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March 28, 2023

The Honorable Benjamin Allen
Chair, Senate Environmental Quality Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 3230
Sacramento, CA 95814
RE: SB 707 (Newman) – Responsible Textile Recovery Act of 2023

RE: SMART position: Support, with likely amendments

Dear Senator Allen:

I am writing on behalf of the Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles Association (SMART) to express support for SB 707 (Newman) – *the Responsible Textile Recovery Act of 2023*. We do, however, anticipate recommending amendments once we have fully canvassed our membership.

SMART is a non-profit trade association founded in 1932 that represents numerous small and medium-sized companies involved in using, converting, and recycling pre- and post-consumer textiles and other secondary materials. Our members' activities are very diverse.

Some SMART members recover and process “pre-consumer” by-products from the textile and fiber industries to be used in new materials for automobiles, home furnishings, and a variety of other products. Others buy and sell “post-consumer” second hand textiles, purchasing excess textile donations collected from various charities and commercial sources (e.g., Salvation Army, Goodwill, hospitals, hotels, industrial laundries, etc.). Some collect used textiles dropped off by the public via clothing collection bins conveniently located throughout communities. Some of these recovered textiles become wiping and polishing cloths used in institutional and industrial settings while others are reprocessed into fibers for furniture stuffing, upholstery, insulation, building and other materials. The items that can be reused as apparel are usually exported, typically to least developed and developing countries where demand for affordable, quality clothing is especially high. While recycled fiber is a useful by-product of the textile recycling trade, it is generally the resale of good, usable textiles that renders the overall industry profitable.

Through these business activities, for-profit textile recyclers create meaningful employment for tens of thousands of people who drive local economies and generate much-needed tax revenue across the United States. Because this industry is global, it also creates hundreds of thousands of jobs throughout the world. SMART industry members also generate meaningful income for numerous well-respected charities and make vital contributions to state and national environmental goals through the recycling of nearly 4 billion pounds of used clothing and other textile waste that would have otherwise gone to a landfill each year.

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SMART is the leading industry voice promoting high standards and best practices for reuse and recycling of textiles and related secondary materials. We are continuously working to educate the public and local government officials about the importance of increasing clothing and textile reuse and recycling. Clothing and household textiles currently make up 6.3%¹ of the waste stream or the equivalent of 81 pounds per person thrown away annually in the US. Nearly 95% of used clothing and textiles can be reused and recycled. Moreover, according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), current clothing and textile recycling has a greater impact on reducing greenhouse gases than the recycling of yard waste, glass, and plastic.²

With these realities in mind, we applaud Senator Newman's efforts to address these concerns by introducing the first Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation for textiles in the United States. Given the nature of SMART members' work, we anticipate our industry will play a vital role in both the formation and the future sustainability of this textile EPR model in California and beyond. This makes our industry's feedback critical as bill proponents move forward to shape and perfect this legislation.

Because this legislation is revolutionary and has the potential to significantly alter the landscape of our industry and that of many other stakeholders globally, we urge California lawmakers to move thoughtfully and deliberately in advancing this legislation and to engage a wide range of stakeholders including SMART in a robust dialogue to ensure this legislation achieves its true intent.

Due to the complexity of our industry and potential impacts of this measure, SMART is still gathering feedback about this bill from its membership. We greatly look forward to being a resource for this committee and the whole California legislature and working with the bill author to share our specific input and any potential recommendations in the days ahead.

On behalf of SMART, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide preliminary feedback on this important piece of legislation. Should you have any questions or need additional information, I can be reached directly at (240) 332-8803 or sdecourcey@msp-amc.com

Sincerely,

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¹ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Report: Advancing Sustainable Materials Management – 2014 Tables and Figures, Table 1, p. 1 (December 2016).

² U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Report: Advancing Sustainable Materials Management – 2014 Fact Sheet, Table 5, p. 15 (November 2016).