



**SECONDARY MATERIALS®
AND RECYCLED TEXTILES**

The Association of Wiping Materials, Used Clothing and Fiber Industries

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June 24, 2024

The Honorable Isaac Bryan
Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
1020 N. Street, Room 164
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 707 (Newman) – Responsible Textile Recovery Act of 2024 – Support, with upcoming amendments

Dear Chairman Bryan:

I am writing on behalf of the [Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles Association \(SMART\)](http://www.smartasn.org) to express conditional support for SB 707 (Newman) – the Responsible Textile Recovery Act of 2024. SMART has been proactively involved throughout the stakeholder process and while we support the legislation at this stage, it is contingent upon further agreed amendments being implemented into the bill in August after the legislative recess. SMART believes these agreed amendments will help ensure that international markets continue to be a part of the textile reuse and recycling solution that is vital for a successful textile EPR program.

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 is often sold in thrift stores throughout America or 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.

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% of the waste stream or the equivalent of 81 pounds per person thrown away annually in the US.ⁱ 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.ⁱⁱ



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With these realities in mind, we commend Senator Newman's initiative to tackle these issues by introducing the first Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation for textiles in the United States. As the backbone of the critical infrastructure necessary for the success of this EPR model, our industry will be pivotal in ensuring its sustainability in California and beyond.

Recognizing that this is a novel piece of legislation and thus uncharted territory, our industry's feedback has been crucial as bill proponents have worked to refine and perfect it. We greatly appreciate the robust stakeholder engagement process led by the bill author, his staff, and the proponents, and we hope this collaborative approach continues throughout the legislative process. While we support this legislation, as already stated, our continued support is contingent upon the adoption of several amendments under Section 42984.10, which describes the required producer responsibility organization (PRO) plan components. These pending amendments have been agreed upon by the bill author and proponents and we look forward to seeing these changes incorporated in the next round of amendments.

As previously mentioned, our industry is mature, well-established, and already significantly contributing to textile reuse, recycling, job creation and boosting local economies. Looking ahead, we strongly urge California officials to maintain robust dialogue with our industry throughout the legislative and rulemaking processes to ensure this legislation achieves its true intent. We look forward to continuing to serve as a valuable resource as you pursue the goal of enacting and successfully implementing the Responsible Textile Recovery Act of 2024.

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,

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

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