

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
On SB 1576**

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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Dear Chair Lieber, Vice-Chair Findley and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jamie Pang South, and I am the Environmental Health Program Director at Oregon Environmental Council (OEC). We are a policy-focused, non-profit environmental group that works throughout Oregon. OEC supports SB 1576 - to establish a statewide mattress stewardship program and a mattress stewardship fund, to ensure that manufacturers share the responsibility for safe management, and disposal of mattresses.

Mattresses are a consumer item that everyone needs, yet no one knows what to do with it after the product's end of life. As a result, mattresses can fill our landfills, streets, and be improperly disposed of. Every day, residents, businesses, and universities across the nation discard more than 50,000 mattresses, and less than 5% of them are recycled.¹

Moreover, many mattresses contain toxic chemicals that are harmful to human health and the environment, when leached into our soil and waterways. Since the 1960's, most mattresses have been made of polyurethane foam, which is a petroleum-based material that emits volatile organic compounds. It can cause respiratory problems and skin irritation. Formaldehyde is used as an adhesive to hold the mattresses together, and causes asthma, allergies, and lung, nose, and throat cancers.² Lastly, many of them are coated in flame-retardants which can also cause cancer.

Oregon needs an extended producer responsibility (EPR) law³ that addresses bulky, hard to recycle items such as mattresses. If done correctly, up to 80% of a mattress' components can

¹ <https://www.productstewardship.us/page/Mattresses>.

² <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2008/03/should-you-ditch-your-chemical-mattress/>.

³ "Extended Producer Responsibility is a concept where manufacturers and importers of products should bear a significant degree of responsibility for the environmental impacts of their products throughout the product life-cycle, including upstream impacts inherent in the selection of materials for the products, impacts from manufacturers' production process itself, and downstream impacts from the use and disposal of the products."
<https://www.oecd.org/env/waste/factsheetextendedproducerresponsibility.htm>.

be recycled⁴-- and therefore also avoid toxic chemical pollution in Oregon's environment. We wish the bill addressed carpets and textiles as well.

We urge you to pass SB 1576 as a commonsense solution to address both a practical disposal problem, in addition to addressing potential environmental contaminants in Oregon's soil and water.

Thank you,

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⁴ <https://www.ijc.org/sites/default/files/what-happens-when-mattress-recycled-infographic.jpg>.