



April 2, 2021

The Honorable Benjamin Allen
Member, California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 4076
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 54 – SUPPORT IN CONCEPT
As Amended February 25, 2021**

Dear Senator Allen:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I am writing to offer our “Support in Concept” position for your Senate Bill 54, which requires manufacturers to ensure that single-use, disposable packaging and food service ware are recyclable or compostable. RCRC is an association of thirty-seven rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from each member county.

In California, local governments are the backbone of solid waste management and recycling efforts. Local governments are also charged with diverting 50 percent of solid waste from landfill disposal through source reduction, recycling, and composting and are subject to significant financial penalties for failure to make progress toward those goals. A broader state goal seeks to source, reduce, recycle, or compost 75 percent of solid waste statewide. To achieve these objectives, California has adopted a wide-ranging program that builds upon substantial private and ratepayer investments. Despite substantial financial investments and programmatic changes, there remain significant challenges to recycling, especially for plastics.

For many years, roughly one-third of the materials annually collected for recycling in California were exported overseas for processing and manufacturing into new products. In 2017, China accounted for 55 percent of the recyclable exports California shipped overseas. Over the last several years, new restrictions on the import and export of mixed plastics has destroyed much of the global market for those materials. These restrictions are having a significant impact on California’s solid waste and recycling systems. Products that Californians long-assumed were easily recyclable are now piling up with nowhere to go. Furthermore, physical similarities between resin types make it difficult to properly sort some high-value plastic products that are otherwise recyclable, thereby

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The Honorable Benjamin Allen
Senate Bill 54
April 2, 2021
Page 2

increasing the risk of feedstock contamination and making it harder and more expensive to recycle.

Another major challenge is often the lack of reliable end markets for those materials. In some respects, local plastic recycling is like sitting on a two-legged stool: we collect the material and sort it, but then there is often no place to send it for recycling.

Local governments and the solid waste industry have no control over which products will be introduced into the marketplace, the same products for which they will ultimately be responsible for management and disposal. As such, it is vital for manufacturers to focus on designing products that are readily recyclable (not just theoretically recyclable) and for which there are end markets. Given that the costs of solid waste management are borne by the residents and businesses in our communities, upfront manufacturer investments in improved product design could significantly reduce cost impacts for those groups.

Beginning January 1, 2032, SB 54 requires manufactures of single-use, disposable packaging and food service ware to ensure that those products sold, distributed, or imported into the state are either recyclable or compostable. We believe that SB 54's focus on requiring manufacturers to design single-use disposable packaging and food service ware to be recyclable or compostable will help address these challenges and facilitate achievement of the state's solid waste management objectives.

Given the importance of the issue, RCRC is pleased to support SB 54 in concept. We look forward to helping refine and improve the bill as it moves through the legislative process. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at jkennedy@rcrcnet.org or (916) 447-4806.

Sincerely,



JOHN KENNEDY
Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Scott Wiener, Member of the State Senate
The Honorable Henry Stern, Member of the State Senate
The Honorable Josh Becker, Member of the State Senate

The Honorable Benjamin Allen
Senate Bill 54
April 2, 2021
Page 3

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez, Member of the State Assembly
The Honorable Al Muratsuchi, Member of the State Assembly
The Honorable Phil Ting, Member of the State Assembly
The Honorable Tasha Boerner Horvath, Member of the State Assembly
The Honorable Wendy Carrillo, Member of the State Assembly
The Honorable Sydney Kamlager, Member of the State Assembly
The Honorable Luz Rivas, Member of the State Assembly
Members of the Environmental Quality Committee
Genevieve Wong, Consultant, Senate Environmental Quality Committee



April 7, 2021

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Member, California State Senate
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**RE: Senate Bill 54 – SUPPORT IN CONCEPT
As Amended February 25, 2021**

Dear Senator Allen:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), the League of California Cities (Cal Cities), and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), we write to offer a “Support in Concept” position for your Senate Bill 54, which requires manufacturers to ensure that single-use, disposable packaging and food service ware are recyclable or compostable.

In California, local governments are the backbone of solid waste management and recycling efforts. Local governments are also charged with diverting 50 percent of solid waste from landfill disposal through source reduction, recycling, and composting and are subject to significant financial penalties for failure to make progress toward those goals. A broader state goal seeks to source, reduce, recycle, or compost 75 percent of solid waste statewide. To achieve these objectives, California has adopted a wide-ranging program that builds upon substantial private and ratepayer investments. Despite substantial financial investments and programmatic changes, there remain significant challenges to recycling, especially for plastics.

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Another major challenge is often the lack of reliable end markets for those materials. In some respects, local plastic recycling is like sitting on a two-legged stool: we collect the material and sort it, but then there is often no place to send it for recycling.

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Given the importance of the issue, we are pleased to support SB 54 in concept. We look forward to helping refine and improve the bill as it moves through the legislative process. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact John Kennedy of RCRC at jkennedy@rcrcnet.org, Derek Dolfie of Cal Cities at ddolfie@cacities.org, or Catherine Freeman of CSAC at cfreeman@counties.org.

Sincerely,



JOHN KENNEDY
Legislative Advocate
RCRC



DEREK DOLFIE
Legislative Representative
Cal Cities



CATHERINE FREEMAN
Legislative Representative
CSAC

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Page 3

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