

A SORTED AFFAIR  
Proposed State Legislation  
Jane Bogner, May 4, 2008

What's going on in Sacramento? Californians Against Waste (CAW) is my source for new legislation that will help the state become greener and healthier. Here are a few bills that are winding their way through the Capitol halls:

Senate Bill (SB) 1625 sponsored by Senator Corbett and CAW will update California's Bottle and Can Recycling Law by expanding the program to include all plastic bottles. This expansion will double the number of plastic containers currently under the program, quadruple current plastic bottle recycling levels, and provide more than \$100 million annually in recycling revenue for curbside programs.

Assembly Bill (AB) 2058 from Assembly member Levine and CAW will require retailers to meet a tough plastic bag diversion mandate if they wish to continue freely distributing plastic bags. If the benchmark is not met, retailers will only be able to hand out bags if they charge a fee of not less than 15 cents per bag. Ireland passed such a law in 2002 that reduced plastic bag consumption by more than 90 percent instantly.

CAW sponsored AB 2505 (Brownley) proposes to phase out the use of PVC (Polyvinyl chloride) resin in consumer packaging. PVC is virtually non-recyclable, contains high levels of phthalates and heavy metals which present a human health threat, and is a costly and potent contaminant in the recycling stream of other, nontoxic alternative plastics.

AB 2640 (Huffman) tackles the state's goal to divert 50 percent of organic waste from landfills by 2020 by creating a program to support and handle this organic waste.

This bill will set up a "Compostable Organics Management Program" that will reward the development of environmentally superior alternatives to landfilling organic compostable materials. The bill would charge a fee of \$1.40 per ton for green materials used as daily cover at landfills instead of being composted.

AB 2347 (Ruskin) would allow Californians to return their waste thermostats to any location that sells new thermostats. Companies that make new thermostats for sale in the state would pick up most of the costs for the recycling program.

AB 3025 (Lieber) Proposes to phase out the use of foamed polystyrene packaging peanuts, a large source of urban plastic litter pollution.

AB 904 (Feuer) This two-year bill phases out the use of nonrecycled plastic takeout food packaging, which is a significant, dangerous and non-biodegradable component of marine debris pollution, by requiring the use of recyclable or compostable food packaging.

State Senator Jack Scott has authored a bill to ban helium-filled metallic balloons. The bill was sparked by utility companies to prevent further power outages caused by metallic balloons tangled in power lines. Last year, there were 211 outages linked to metallic balloons. The outages disrupted power to over 150,000 customers.

This writer would ask for a ban of all balloons used outdoors as I have picked up many when hiking in the mountains.

#### FREE WATERWISE WORKSHOPS

The Vallejo and Benicia water departments are sponsoring a series of Waterwise classes to reduce the use of water in the garden. At Vallejo's JFK Library is an irrigation design class on May 6 and plant selection call on May 13. Call 707 648-5299 to reserve your spot in Vallejo.

In Benicia, at Heritage Hall (East 2<sup>nd</sup> at Military), the irrigation design class is on May 7 and plant selection class is on May 14. Call 707 746-4792 to reserve your spot in Benicia. All classes are from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Water saving tools, literature and door prizes will be distributed.

Gardening tip:

Reuse your wine corks by placing them in the bottom of your pots. Corks will encourage drainage and make the pots lighter to move around. Alternatively, corks are fine to compost. Chop them up a bit to help them rot more quickly.

*VALCORE Recycling Board Secretary Jane Bogner's "A Sorted Affair" is published every other week in the Times-Herald. For recycling information call VALCORE Recycling at 645-8258 or visit [www.VALCORErecycling.org](http://www.VALCORErecycling.org).*

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