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Extended Producer Responsibility Commission

Background document for policy recommendation on

MATTRESSES

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Executive Summary

Between 75–90% of mattress components, including steel, wood, cotton, and foam, are recyclable.¹ But according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), with data from the Department of Commerce, International Sleep Products Association (ISPA), and the Mattress Recycling Council (MRC), less than 10% of used mattresses are recovered for reuse or recycling nationally.²

Landfilling, illegally dumping, or other improper disposal of mattresses waste valuable resources and contribute to pollution:

- Ferrous metals (i.e., iron and steel) are the largest category of metals found in municipal solid waste collection.³ While steel is 100% recyclable, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the recycling rate of ferrous materials from durable goods, including from furniture, to be 27.8%.⁴
- Mattress foam is made up of materials such as polyurethane, flame retardants, and volatile organic compounds, which can leech into groundwater and soil and pose a threat to ecosystems.⁵
- Mattresses are bulky and costly to transport.
- Mattresses take up a considerable amount of space in landfills and are difficult to handle in municipal solid waste combustion facilities.⁶

The Massachusetts Department Environmental Protection (MassDEP) reports that more than 600,000 mattresses and box springs are discarded annually in Massachusetts.⁷ On November 1, 2022, Massachusetts added mattresses to its waste disposal bans (310 CMR 19.017), meaning these materials cannot be discarded in the state's landfills, waste-to-energy plants, or transferred for disposal unless they are contaminated.

The nonprofit MRC operates recycling programs in states that have enacted mattress extended producer responsibility (EPR) laws: California, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and, most recently, Oregon. The program is funded through a flat-rate fee at the point of sale for consumers—including individuals, hotels, hospitals, and universities—for all mattresses and foundations (box springs), regardless of size or type. Both brick-and-mortar and e-commerce retailers are required to assess the fee at the point of sale.

¹ Estimates range between 75% (Mattress Recycling Council) and 90%, according to some recyclers.

² U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. "Facts and figures about materials, waste, and recycling for durable goods: furniture and furnishings." Accessed June 10, 2025, at <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/durable-goods-product-specific-data#DurableGoodsOverview>.

³ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Ferrous metals: material-specific data. Accessed June 27, 2025, from <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/ferrous-metals-material-specific-data>.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ CollectYourOldBed.com. The consequences of improperly disposing of a mattress. Accessed June 27, 2025, from <https://collectyouroldbed.com/the-consequences-of-improperly-disposing-of-a-mattress/>.

⁶ Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. Mattress Recycling. Accessed June 27, 2025, from <https://www.mass.gov/guides/mattress-recycling>.

⁷ Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. Mattress Recycling. Accessed June 27, 2025, from <https://www.mass.gov/guides/mattress-recycling>.

Program fees in current participating states range from \$16.00–\$22.50 to cover the costs of program administration, contracting, transportation, containers, collection events, education and outreach, and oversight.

Data suggest that MRC's mattress recycling program has made significant progress toward participating states' goals. For example:

- In its first year of implementation, the mattress recycling rate in Connecticut rose from 8.7% to 63.5%.⁸
- The City of San Diego saw a 25% decrease in illegal mattress dumping in 2023.⁹
- Tallying up all four participating states through 2025, more than 500 million pounds of materials have been recycled throughout the lifetime of the program, saving 14.9 million cubic yards of landfill space.¹⁰

While municipal mattress recycling programs have grown considerably since 2016, 27% of Massachusetts residents live in a community where there is either no municipal mattress collection program or there is no data available on a municipal program¹¹. In these municipalities, residents must pay directly for mattress recycling and collection services. Mattress collection and recycling costs, which are paid for by municipalities or by fees paid by residents, are estimated at \$12.4 million annually¹². Municipal officials have stated that mattress recycling fees can create incentives for illegal dumping, which can increase management costs.

A statewide EPR program would alleviate costs to municipalities that absorb program costs via their municipal solid waste programs and are burdened with the administrative responsibilities of collection, contracting for recycling, and transportation. A mattress EPR program would provide clear, uniform instructions for residents and bulk users such as hotels, hospitals, and universities on end-of-life options for mattress removal. Yet another benefit is a reduction in illegal dumping, which can occur when mattress disposal options are expensive, unavailable, or unclear.

Note that the MRC mattress recycling program does not include the cost of curbside pickup or in-home mattress removal, which municipalities provide independently is desired.

⁸ Product Stewardship Institute. "Up to 90% of materials in mattresses are recyclable."

⁹ Inside San Diego. City News Team. "City of San Diego celebrates success of mattress recycling program." March 3, 2025, 11:16 a.m. Accessed June 30, 2025, from <https://www.insidesandiego.org/city-san-diego-celebrates-success-mattress-recycling-program>.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ Based on data reported to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection through the 2024 Municipal Solid Waste and Recycling Survey. Accessed June 10, 2025. <https://www.mass.gov/doc/2024-municipal-solid-waste-recycling-survey-responses/download>

¹² Mattress EPR Background Document, June 10, 2025, Product Stewardship Institute, <https://www.mass.gov/doc/2025-06-10-mattress-background-document/download>.

Extended Producer Responsibility Commission Recommendation

The Commission recommends that the Massachusetts Legislature enact legislation on or before July 31, 2026, to establish an extended producer responsibility program for mattresses. The Commission recommends the development and implementation of a program that aligns with programs already in place in neighboring states (Connecticut and Rhode Island) to provide consistency across the region.

The Commission acknowledges proposed mattress EPR legislation under consideration before the Massachusetts legislature at the time of report publication—H.1023, H.3985, and S.614—but does not endorse any specific bill.

The Commission recommends consideration of the following questions:

1. Should the mattress fee should be a flat fee or a variable fee based on size of mattress or cost? Current EPR programs have a flat fee regardless of the size (twin, full, queen, king) or cost of the mattress.
2. Should the disposal cost of mattresses that cannot be collected and recycled through the program be included?
3. Should the fee be collected at the wholesale or retail level? In current mattress EPR programs the fee is collected at the point of retail sale.
4. Should the EPR fee cover some form or partial cost of municipal curbside collection?

Background: The Problem

Approximately 36 to 42 million mattresses are sold annually in the U.S., though these estimates are challenged by a lack of uniform national data collection methodology.^{13,14} Based on these figures, Americans discard 18–20 million mattresses annually, which is an approximate 45–50% mattress replacement rate, according to the Mattress Recycling Council—meaning for every two mattresses sold, approximately one is thrown out.¹⁵

Between 75–90% of mattress components, including steel, wood, cotton, and foam, are recyclable.¹⁶ But according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, with data from the Department of Commerce, International Sleep Products Association (ISPA), and the MRC, less than 10% of used mattresses are recovered for reuse or recycling nationally.¹⁷

Landfilling, illegally dumping, or other improper disposal of mattresses waste valuable resources and contribute to pollution:

- Ferrous metals (i.e., iron and steel) are the largest category of metals found in municipal solid waste collection.¹⁸ While steel is 100% recyclable, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates the recycling rate of ferrous materials from durable goods, including from furniture, to be 27.8%.¹⁹
- Mattress foam is made up of materials such as polyurethane, flame retardants, and volatile organic compounds, which can leech into groundwater and soil and pose a threat to ecosystems.²⁰
- Mattresses are bulky and costly to transport
- Mattresses take up a considerable amount of space in landfills and are difficult to handle in municipal solid waste combustion facilities.²¹

Mattress removal and recycling in Massachusetts

According to the Massachusetts Department Environmental Protection (MassDEP), an estimated 600,000 mattresses and box springs are discarded annually in Massachusetts.²²

¹³ TheRoundUp.org. 39 official mattress industry statistics. Accessed June 30, 2025, from <https://theroundup.org/mattress-industry-statistics/#:~:text=Statistics%20show%20that%20the%20majority,firms%20are%20in%20the%20US?>.

¹⁴ Sleepdoctor.com. 25+ stats about mattresses. Accessed June 30, 2025, from <https://sleepdoctor.com/pages/reviews/statistics-about-mattresses>.

¹⁵ Mattress Recycling Council. Program Guide. 2021, page 2. Accessed June 10, 2025, at <https://mattressrecyclingcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/MRCprogramguide.pdf>.

¹⁶ Estimates range between 75% (Mattress Recycling Council) and 90%, according to some recyclers.

¹⁷ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. “Facts and figures about materials, waste, and recycling for durable goods: furniture and furnishings.” Accessed June 10, 2025, at <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/durable-goods-product-specific-data#DurableGoodsOverview>.

¹⁸ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Ferrous metals: material-specific data. Accessed June 27, 2025, from <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/ferrous-metals-material-specific-data>.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ CollectYourOldBed.com. The consequences of improperly disposing of a mattress. Accessed June 27, 2025, from <https://collectyouroldbed.com/the-consequences-of-improperly-disposing-of-a-mattress/>.

²¹ Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. Mattress Recycling. Accessed June 27, 2025, from <https://www.mass.gov/guides/mattress-recycling>.

²² *Ibid.*

On November 1, 2022, Massachusetts added mattresses to its waste disposal bans (310 CMR 19.017), meaning these materials cannot be discarded in the state's landfills, waste-to-energy plants, or transferred for disposal unless they are contaminated with mold, bodily fluids, insects, or oil or hazardous substances.

Leading up to the waste disposal ban, MassDEP provided \$2.7 million in grants to 128 municipalities and 34 additional regional participants to assist with mattress collection and recycling efforts. The state has also contracted with four vendors to accept and manage mattress recycling.²³

As of June 2025, there are nine known mattress recyclers in the state.²⁴ As of 2024, an estimated 399,000 mattresses and box springs were recycled or reused, or roughly 66% of the total estimated number of units discarded that year.

Massachusetts' mattress waste disposal ban and current recycling system, however, has resulted in a patchwork of municipalities and communities with widely varying options, policies, and costs (see Figure 1). For example, in brief:

- The suburban community of Sudbury, with a median household income of \$234,634 and a 2.6% poverty rate, will accept mattresses at the Sudbury Transfer Station on Boston Post Road for a fee of \$50 per item.^{25,26}
- The more urban community of Chelsea, with a median household income of \$72,220 and a 20.6% poverty rate, offers free curbside mattress pickup on Mondays and Thursdays for city trash customers.^{27,28} Those who are not city trash customers pay a fee of \$40 per item for city mattress pickup.
- In western Massachusetts, the rural community of Chester, with a median household income of \$87,308 and a 2.0% poverty rate, does not offer mattress disposal, nor do they provide resources or information on mattress disposal or recycling on their website.^{29,30}

²³ Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Operational Services Division: FAC90designatedDEP: Carpet and Mattress Recycling Services Statewide Contract. Accessed July 2, 2025, from <https://www.mass.gov/doc/fac90designateddep/download>.

²⁴ Data from Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection review of available information including state contract vendors, general permits issued for mattress recycling operations, and other available information, conducted spring 2025.

²⁵ United States Census Bureau. Quick Facts: Sudbury town, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, data in 2023 dollars. Accessed June 26, 2025, from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/sudburytownmiddlesexcountymassachusetts,MA>.

²⁶ Town of Sudbury. Transfer Station Fees. Published February 15, 2024. Accessed June 26, 2025, at <https://sudbury.ma.us/transferstation/2024/02/15/transfer-station-fees/>.

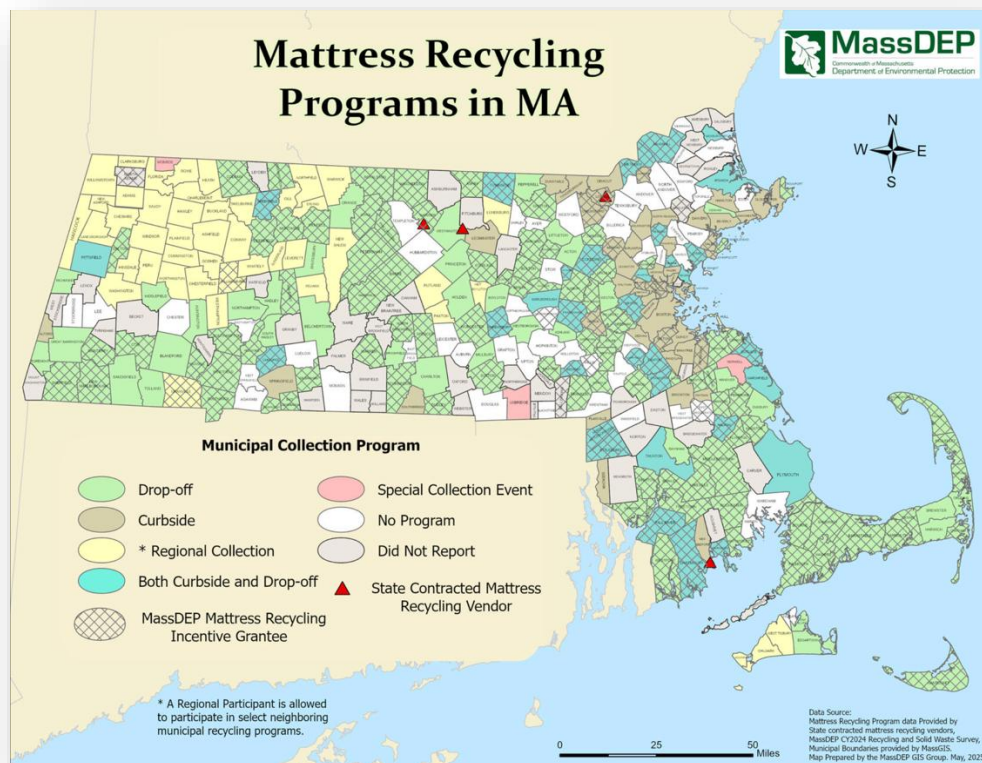
²⁷ United States Census Bureau, Quick Facts: Chelsea city, Massachusetts, data in 2023 dollars. Accessed June 26, 2025, from https://recyclingworksma.com/recyclers/?fwp_material=mattresses.

²⁸ City of Chelsea, Massachusetts. Mattress Recycling. Accessed June 25, 2026, from https://www.chelseama.gov/departments/public_works/trash_recycle_yard_waste/disposal_regulations/mattress_recycling.php.

²⁹ United States Census Bureau. Chester town, Hampden County, Massachusetts, data from 2023 estimates. Accessed June 26, 2025, from https://test.data.census.gov/profile/Chester_town,_Hampden_County,_Massachusetts?q=060XX00US2501313485#income-and-poverty.

³⁰ Town of Chester. Transfer Station. Accessed June 25, 2026, from <https://townofchester.net/transfer-station/>.

Figure 1. — Mattress recycling programs in Massachusetts³¹



Beyond municipal recycling programs, Massachusetts residents have some additional options:

- When buying a new mattress, retailers will often offer to remove and recycle an old mattress as part of new mattress delivery.
- MassDEP's [Beyond the Bin](#) identifies organizations that will accept or collect used mattresses for reuse or recycling. These organizations will typically charge a fee.

Components of mattresses are recycled or reused by disassembling them using a combination of manual and automated equipment and organizing their raw materials.³² As shown and described in Figure 2, parts of mattresses can be recycled in the following ways:

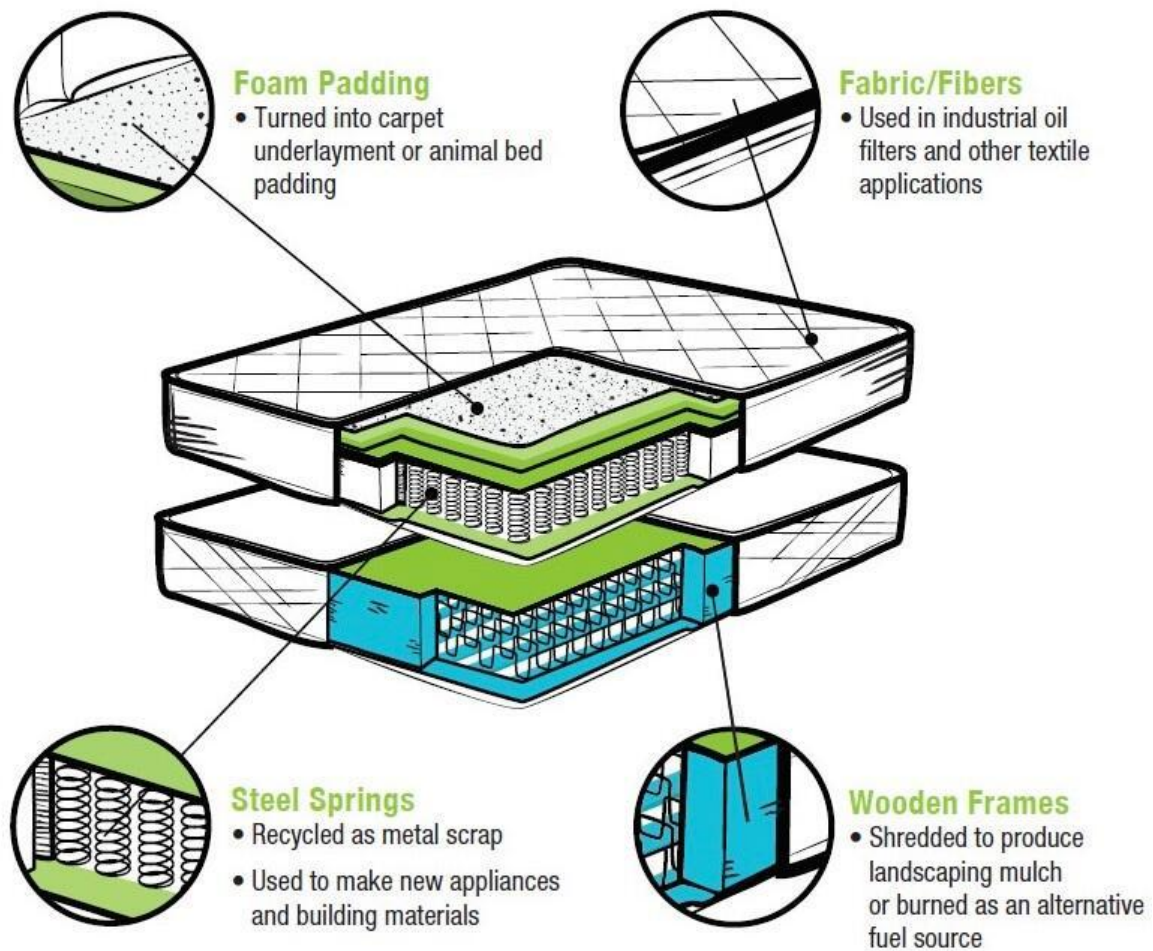
- Foam padding is turned into carpet underlayment or animal bed padding.
- Fabric and fibers are used in industrial oil filters and other textile applications.
- Steel springs are sent to scrap yards and ground up to be resold and reused to make new appliances and building materials.³³
- Wooden frames are shredded to produce landscaping mulch or burned as an alternative fuel source.

³¹ Image from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, accessed June 25, 2025, from <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/map-massachusetts-communities-that-provide-for-mattress-recycling>.

³² Data from Mattress Recycling Council.

³³ Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. HandUp Case Study. Accessed June 27, 2025, at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/handup-case-study/download>.

Figure 2. — How mattress components are recycled³⁴



³⁴ Image courtesy of the Mattress Recycling Council.

Proposed Solution

The [International Sleep Products Association](#) (ISPA) is a trade association representing mattress manufacturers and component suppliers. In 2015, the ISPA formed the nonprofit [Mattress Recycling Council](#) (MRC) to operate recycling programs in states that have enacted mattress EPR laws. MRC in turn created a consumer-facing program, [Bye Bye Mattress](#), to provide responsible mattress recycling currently in four states: California, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and, most recently, Oregon.

As it exists in other states, the Bye Bye Mattress program is funded through a flat-rate fee at the point of sale for consumers—including individuals, hotels, hospitals, and universities—for all mattresses and foundations (box springs), regardless of size or type. Both brick-and-mortar and e-commerce retailers are required to assess the fee at the point of sale.

How Mattress Recycling Council programs work

MRC offers three channels for mattress and box spring collection:³⁵

- Via existing state solid waste collection infrastructure to establish collection sites at landfills, transfer stations, or public works yards or by working with curbside collectors such as municipalities or waste contractors
- Via collection events for consumers
- Via commercial volume programs

MRC uses the point-of-sale fee to provide:

- Program administration
- Competitive bidding for contracts with collection sites, transporters, and mattress recyclers
- Mattress and box spring transportation to recyclers and recycling
- Containers for collection sites
- Hosting collection events
- Education and outreach efforts
- Oversight and enforcement

Flat vs. adjusted fee

MRC uses a flat per-unit fee in each participating state, rather than assessing fees based on variables such as mattress size, density, content, or price. MRC has considered alternative formulas for calculating the mattress recycling fee and concluded that it was necessary to set a fee that:

- Is simple and easy for consumers and retailers to understand and apply
- Is easy to verify whether the retailer has applied and collected the fee correctly
- Covers the full cost to dismantle and recycle the mattress being discarded
- Allows MRC to budget revenues in a predictable manner

³⁵ Mattress Recycling Council 2025.

In short, according to MRC, complexity may compromise program success, as complex fee schedules may decrease the likelihood of compliance from retailers, recyclers, and consumers. The current legislation filed in Massachusetts does not specifically identify fee structures, only that an assessment would be established in the plan to be approved by MassDEP.

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Costs and Benefits

Program fees in current participating states range from \$16.00–\$22.50, as illustrated in Table 1. Fees are occasionally reassessed to adjust for inflation and market fluctuation (see Figure 3).

Table 1. — Overview of Mattress Recycling Council programs in participating states³⁶

	Connecticut	California	Rhode Island	Oregon
Launch date	May 1, 2015	Dec 30, 2015	May 1, 2016	Jan 1, 2025
Flat fee in 2025	\$16.00	\$16.00	\$20.50	\$22.50
State population	3,675,069 ³⁷	39,431,263 ³⁸	1,112,308 ³⁹	4,272,371 ⁴⁰
Mattresses recycled to date	1,700,000	13,000,000	750,000	no data

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³⁶ Data from Mattress Recycling Council.

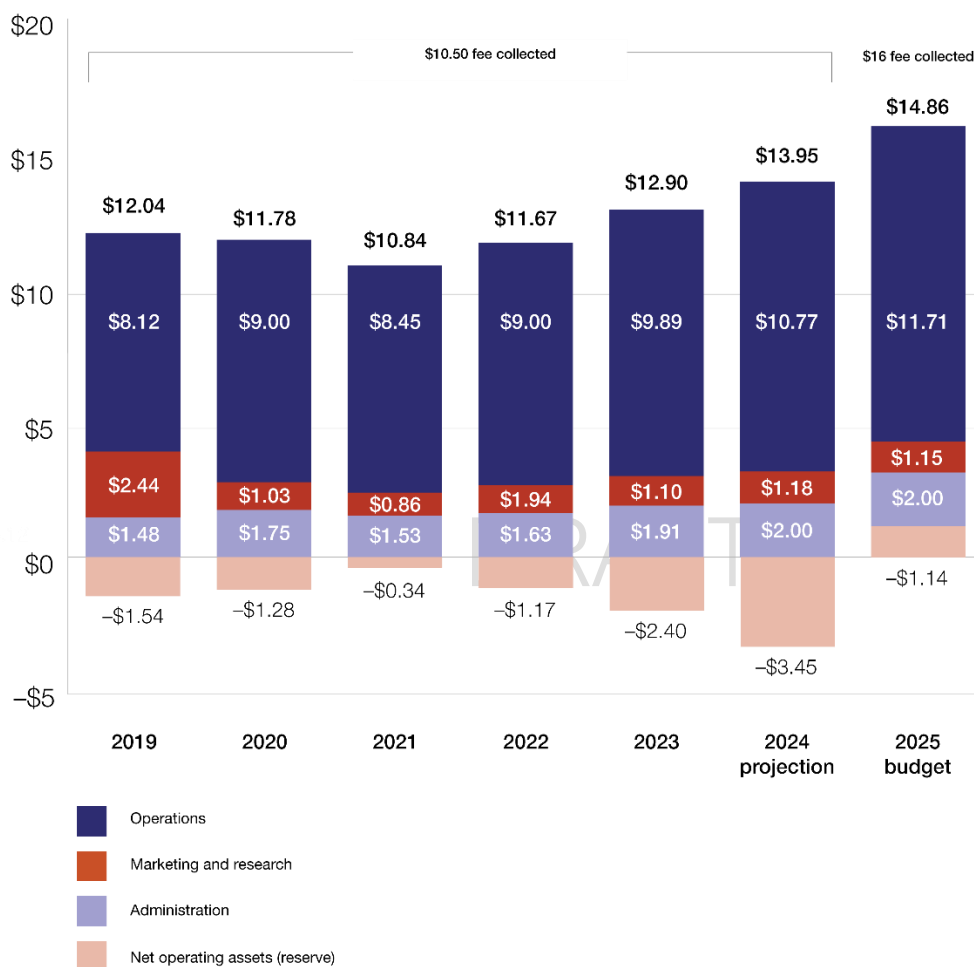
³⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. Fast Facts: Connecticut. Accessed June 27, 2025, from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/CT/PST045224>.

³⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. Fast Facts: California. Accessed June 27, 2025, from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/CA/PST045224>.

³⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. Fast Facts: Rhode Island. Accessed June 27, 2025, from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/RI/PST045224>.

⁴⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. Fast Facts: Oregon. Accessed June 27, 2025, from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/OR/PST045224>.

Figure 3. — Cost of mattress recycling per unit sold, California: 2019–2025 budgeted⁴¹



One main benefit to a statewide mattress EPR program is alleviating costs to municipalities. As shown in Figure 1 above, Massachusetts’ 351 municipalities offer a range of mattress recycling options to residents, including collection events, drop-off sites, and even free curbside pickup. Municipalities that offer no program leave residents without a clear option for disposal.

Thus, a statewide mattress EPR program would alleviate costs to municipalities that absorb program costs via their municipal solid waste programs and are burdened with the administrative responsibilities of collection, contracting for recycling, and transportation. A mattress EPR program would provide clear, uniform instructions for residents and bulk users such as hotels, hospitals, and universities on end-of-life options for mattress removal. Yet another benefit is a reduction in illegal dumping, which can occur when mattress disposal options are expensive, unavailable, or unclear.

⁴¹ Data from California Used Mattress Recovery and Recycling 2025 Program Budget. July 1, 2024. Submitted by Mattress Recycling Council California, LLC, to California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery.

Program success in participating states

Data suggest that MRC's mattress recycling program has made significant progress toward participating states' goals. For example:

- In its first year of implementation, the mattress recycling rate in Connecticut rose from 8.7% to 63.5%.⁴²
- The City of San Diego saw a 25% decrease in illegal mattress dumping in 2023.⁴³
- Tallying up all four participating states through 2025, more than 500 million pounds of materials have been recycled throughout the lifetime of the program, saving 14.9 million cubic yards of landfill space.⁴⁴

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⁴² Product Stewardship Institute. "Up to 90% of materials in mattresses are recyclable."

⁴³ Inside San Diego. City News Team. "City of San Diego celebrates success of mattress recycling program." March 3, 2025, 11:16 a.m. Accessed June 30, 2025, from <https://www.insidesandiego.org/city-san-diego-celebrates-success-mattress-recycling-program>.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Public Support

See fact sheet and supporting organizations at Massachusetts Product Stewardship Council:

<https://massrecycle.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Mattress-EPR-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

In addition, the International Sleep Products Association (ISPA) submitted a statement of support as follows:

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The International Sleep Products Association (ISPA) represents mattress manufacturers and suppliers of components and services to the mattress industry. ISPA has a long history of supporting well crafted mattress EPR legislation, and we continue to support legislation like HB 1023, filed by Representative Phillips in Massachusetts this year.

ISPA is proud to be a leader in mattress recycling. As the primary association representing the mattress industry in the U.S., ISPA works to assist our members in not only improving the environmental sustainability of their operations, but also their products. To further this goal, ISPA created the Mattress Recycling Council (MRC) to operate mattress recycling programs in states that adopt mattress recycling program laws. MRC currently operates statewide mattress recycling in California, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. In the 10 years the MRC program has been operating, it has successfully recycled over 15 million mattresses and boxsprings and is now processing over 2 million mattresses annually.

HB 1023 would create a mattress recycling program in Massachusetts based on the successful operations that MRC is running in existing states. Like those other programs, Rep. Philips' bill would require the mattress industry to develop and run the program, subject to state oversight from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Through a network of municipal and private collection sites as well as third-party transporters and recyclers, MRC would provide no-cost and accessible state-wide opportunities for residents and businesses to discard their used mattresses for recycling. The program provides cost-effective recycling that saves cities, towns, retailers and consumers money.

We look forward to continuing our work with the Extended Producer Responsibility Commission and our pursuit of bringing a sustainable, workable mattress recycling solution to Massachusetts. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact [Alison Keane](#), [Grant Johnson](#) or [Dan McGowan](#).



EPR Commission Recommendation

Table 6 shows a detailed breakdown of how the EPR Commission voted on the following resolution:

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Table 6. —Extended Producer Responsibility Commission vote on enacting mattress stewardship legislation⁴⁵

Commissioner	Title, Organization	Vote
John Beling, Chair	Deputy Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	
Rep. Christine Barber	Appointee for Rep. Michael Day, Massachusetts House of Representatives	
Senator Mike Barrett	Chair, Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Energy, and Utilities	
Sharon Byrne Kishida	Nominee, Senate Minority Leader	
Leigh-Anne Cole	Executive Director, Community Action Works	
Jose Delgado	Arise for Social Justice	
Janet Domenitz	Executive Director, MassPIRG	
Lew Dubuque	Vice President, Northeast Chapter, National Waste and Recycling Association	
Magda Garncarz	Vice President of Government Affairs, Associated Industries of Massachusetts	
Sarah Kalish	Executive Office of Economic Development	
Dalene LaPointe	Assistant Director, Environmental Toxicology Program at Massachusetts Department of Public Health	
David Melly	Legislative Director, Environmental League of Massachusetts	
Conor O'Shaughnessy	Budget Director and Environmental Policy Analyst, Office of Senator Bruce Tarr	
Andrew Potter	Chair, Select Board, Town of West Stockbridge	
Catherine Ratte	Director, Land Use and Environment Department, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission	
Bill Rennie	Senior Vice President, Retailers Association of Massachusetts	
Neil Rhein	Executive Director, Keep Massachusetts Beautiful	
Waneta Trabert	Vice President, MassRecycle	
Tracy Triplett	Senior Enforcement Counsel, Office of Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell	
Abbie Webb	Vice President of Sustainability, Casella Waste Management	

⁴⁵ From a vote taken at a XXX, 2025, EPR Commission meeting.