

Mitchell, Williams, Selig, Gates & Woodyard, P.L.L.C.

Design for Recycling Resolution: House of Representatives Legislation Introduced to Encourage Manufacturers to Design Products to Maximize Their Recyclability



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12/10/2025

Congressman Lou Correa introduced the Design for Recycling Resolution (“Resolution”) that is described as recognizing and encouraging:

... efforts by manufacturers to reduce waste and consumption of raw materials by designing products to maximize their recyclability.

The Resolution is described as recognizing the recycling industry’s contributions to the United States economy and the environment, through:

- Jobs created.
- Revenue and taxes generated.
- Recovery of goods (including rare earth materials).

The Resolution describes “design for recycling” (“DFR”) as a:

... method of designing products to ensure they are made from recycled material, are free of hazardous materials that may impede the recycling process, and can be easily recycled through current or newly designed recycling processes and procedures after the end of their life in a cost-effective manner.

The Resolution argues that DFR would:

- Reduce the amount of waste that ending up in landfills.
- Reduce greenhouse gases.
- Reduce consumption of raw materials.
- Recycling materials industry annually contributes nearly \$170 billion to the United States economy.
- According to the Recycled Materials Association:
- Generates \$7,160,000,000 in State and local tax revenues.
- Provides nearly 600,000 jobs in the United States both directly and indirectly.
- In 2022, the recycled materials industry recycled over 137,000,000 metric tons of materials.
- According to calculations from the Waste Reduction Model, Version 16, of the Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”), using recycled materials in manufacturing reduces energy consumption by up to 90 percent.

- EPA estimates that about 75 percent of waste is recyclable, but only 35 percent of that is actually recycled.
- Americans generated more than 267,000,000 tons of solid waste in 2020.
- Container and fiberglass industries collectively purchase 3,350,000 tons of recycled glass annually, which is remelted and repurposed for use in the production of new containers and fiberglass products.
- 75 percent of global plastics produced are thermoplastics that can be melted and molded over and over to produce new plastics.
- Only 20 percent of the polyethylene terephthalate, high-density polyethylene, and polypropylene plastics in circulation in the United States are recycled.
- United States generates about 6,900,000 tons of e-waste but only recycles around 25 percent.
- E-waste has hazardous chemicals such as lead, mercury, and arsenic that can require special disposal methods.
- Recycling e-waste is a sustainable way to recover rare earth materials.
- American Forest and Paper Association nearly 60 percent more paper products are recycled today than in 1990.
- The Recycling Partnership states that additional investment in recycling will create 200,000 new jobs.
- Material journey mapping can help companies succeed at DFR.
- California Redemption Value program incentivizes consumers through the free market to return their cans and bottles to a recycling center.
- The circular economy is a system where products and materials are kept in circulation through processes like maintenance, reuse, recycling, and composting.
- Companies that assist manufacturers to embrace a circular approach through their eco-design and sustainable sourcing models.
- Using local resources in manufacturing and understanding locally available resources can promote circularity.
- Product life extension means keeping material and products in the supply chain for as long as possible.
- Dematerialization is a strategy to minimize the use of raw materials and energy in product creation while maintaining the products quality.
- Collection of recycling data by CalRecycle is critical to helping manufacturers design packaging for recyclability.
- DFR would encourage manufacturers of goods to ensure their products are made of recycled material and fully recyclable.

A copy of the Resolution can be found [here](#).