



CECILIA AGUIAR-CURRY
Assembly Majority Leader, District 4



PRESS RELEASE

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Assembly Majority Leader Aguiar-Curry's Legislation to Overhaul Carpet Recycling Program Signed by Governor

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Assembly Majority Leader Cecilia Aguiar-Curry (D-Winters) announced that her Assembly Bill 863 was signed into law by Governor Newsom. AB 863 overhauls the consumer-funded carpet recycling program in California while allowing the current program to continue operating with increased auditing and enhanced fines. The bill also allocates at least 8% of program funds for workforce development.

Since July 2011, California consumers have paid a carpet stewardship assessment fee when purchasing carpet sold in California. This fee funds a statewide carpet recycling program known as the Carpet America Recovery Effort (CARE), which is a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) designed and implemented by carpet manufacturers with CalRecycle oversight. However, CARE has continually failed to administer the program effectively and equitably, and has required oversight and repeated enforcement by CalRecycle. In the meantime, recyclers and collectors have left the state or gone out of business due to a lack of feedstock, while carpet is still being landfilled.

“I want to thank the Governor for his support of AB 863. This bill strengthens transparency and accountability for CARE, and will greatly increase the program's performance by training more workers to improve product recyclability,” said Cecilia Aguiar-Curry (D-Winters). “Even with constant intervention and enforcement actions by CalRecycle and the California legislature, CARE’s failure to successfully manage California’s carpet recycling program has resulted in more carpet in landfills, wasted consumer fee money, constant litigation with the state, and serious damage to recycling infrastructure in this state. We will fix this program by expanding auditing and increasing fines for bad performance. We owe it our state's consumers to make sure the fees they pay are used effectively, create jobs for California workers and invest in California’s carpet recycling industry.”

“We will have a noticeably better program with California stakeholders informing program decisions directly having four non-voting seats on the Board of the industry group. Additionally,

the law requires carpet drop-off to be free and ensures carpet collectors and installers are compensated and trained for their effort to make the program work,” said Heidi Sanborn, Executive Director of the National Stewardship Action Council.

“Assembly Bill 863 will ensure California meets its carpet recycling goals by requiring proper installation by a skilled and trained workforce. The funding for our apprenticeship programs provided in this bill will generate training opportunities for many young adults,” said Robert Williams III, of BMST District Council 16, and Luis Robles, of BMST District Council 36 of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades.

Four major processors in California are no longer in operation in part because of consistently poor performance by CARE, including a carpet recycling facility Woodland that had to shut down. The Woodland facility’s closure resulted in the loss of fifty green jobs to an Arizona facility that is now receiving carpet while California’s remaining facilities advocate for more feedstock. AB 863 is set to prevent any further loss of infrastructure and jobs in the carpet recycling industry, and will take effect in January of 2025.

AB 863 requires all producers to join a single plan under CalRecycle to sell covered products in California. Further, the bill increases enforcement penalties and ineligibility for CARE to up to \$25,000 per day and establishes audit standards to improve CalRecycle’s ability to oversee the program. Finally, AB 863 allocates 8% of funds dedicated to workforce development through approved apprenticeship programs to improve carpet recycling practices throughout the state.

Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry represents the 4th Assembly District, which includes all of Lake, Colusa, Napa, and Yolo Counties, and part of Sonoma County.

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