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**Contact: Ben.Cheever@sen.ca.gov**  
O: (916) 651-4024 | C: (916) 770-7605

## **Senator Allen Introduces Extended Producer Responsibility Legislation for Household Hazardous Waste**

**SACRAMENTO** - Senator Ben Allen (D-Santa Monica) introduced [SB 501](#), which will establish the nation's second Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program for household hazardous waste (HHW).

"Managing our waste streams has gotten more costly and more dangerous with the increase in household hazardous waste over recent years," said Senator Allen. "EPR is a valuable and proven method to achieving a safer and more sustainable economy that works for everyone involved. We need producers to be a partner in this effort to relieve the immense burdens on local governments, ratepayers, and waste personnel."

HHW includes everyday household items such as pesticides, pool cleaners, compressed gas cylinders, and electronic vaping devices. Improper disposal of HHW can lead to toxic chemicals contaminating the environment or exposing first responders and residents when combusted in fires. It can also expose waste workers to dangerous reactions when mixed in the trash and compacted in trucks, trailers and landfills. [Recent data](#) from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reports waste management collection as the fourth deadliest job in the country.

"Extended producer responsibility (EPR) – ensuring producers, not taxpayers, pay the cost to manage their products at the end-of-life – has long been a focus of my work. Today, Senator Allen introduced SB 501, which would apply EPR to costly and difficult-to-handle household hazardous waste which is not already in a recycling program in California," said Heidi Sanborn with the National Stewardship Action Council (NSAC), the sponsor of the bill.

Providing convenient access to HHW collection and removing contamination of HHW from the trash or recycling will be critical to making laws such as the groundbreaking [SB 54 \(Allen, 2021\)](#) successful. "Cal-Waste Recovery Systems is only collecting and processing curbside recycling bins, yet in 2023 removed 183,000 pounds of HHW from the recycling sort line. The danger this poses to our workers and the contamination of food-grade materials from hazardous items should be of utmost concern to us all," said Rudy Vaccarezza, owner of Cal-Waste Systems.

In 2021, California’s Commission on Recycling Markets and Curbside Recycling, composed of 16 experts representing materials management companies, local governments, unions, and NGOs, unanimously recommended that the legislature establish EPR for HHW. In 2023, Vermont became the first state to pass a law creating EPR for HHW, which requires the producers of covered HHW to fund and operate a convenient collection system to ensure proper management of HHW. Several other states are also looking to introduce EPR bills for HHW in 2025, and several [local governments, including Los Angeles County, are considering and drafting local HHW EPR ordinances.](#)

John Kennedy, Legislative Advocate of the Regional Council of Rural Counties said, “The cost of managing household hazardous waste continues to increase well beyond what local governments can bear. We need producers to share the costs to properly manage and dispose of the products they introduce into the stream of commerce. We believe SB 501 will reduce cost pressures on local governments and drive producers to make their products safer and easier to manage at the end of their useful lives.”

“The mass amounts of HHW stored in residents’ homes left behind a toxic mess in the wake of the LA fires earlier this year,” said Senator Allen. “This EPR Program will provide greater efficiency and know-how for residents to safely dispose of these products, rather than leaving them to sit and rot in their garages.”

SB 501 will be referred to its relevant policy committee in the coming weeks.



*Ben Allen represents the 24th State Senate District, which consists of the Westside, Hollywood, coastal South Bay, and Santa Monica Mountains communities of Los Angeles County.*