

Connecticut Says Hello to Bye Bye Mattress

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Today, Connecticut becomes the first state in the nation with a statewide recycling program for used mattresses and box springs. The program, known as Bye Bye Mattress, is administered by the Mattress Recycling Council (MRC), a non-profit organization created by the mattress industry to develop and manage the state mattress recycling program mandated by law in 2013. Connecticut's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), city leaders and representatives from the solid waste and recycling industry gathered at the City of Hartford's Bulky Waste & Recycling Center to commemorate the inaugural truckload of mattresses bound for the recycling facility.

"The implementation of this first in the nation mattress stewardship program means previously discarded mattresses will be recycled in an environmentally sound manner, sustaining jobs in Connecticut and resulting in cost savings for municipalities," said DEEP's Commissioner Robert Klee. "This program mirrors similar stewardship programs the state has enacted for electronics, paint and thermostats. We recognize the Mattress Recycling Council for their commitment to the success of this program and the City of Hartford for their leadership in getting this law passed."

Bye Bye Mattress allows Connecticut residents to drop-off used mattresses at participating collection sites and recycling facilities for free. Almost 50 cities and towns across Connecticut have joined the program as designated collection locations, with some also providing curbside pick-up. These sites span the state across urban and rural areas. Residents that take their used mattresses directly to one of the designated recycling facilities located in East Hartford or Bridgeport will receive \$2 per mattress from the recycler (limit four per person per day/eight per person per year). Connecticut residents can find their nearest participating collection site or recycling facility at www.byebyemattress.com.

MRC is also working with mattress retailers, hotels, military facilities, universities, healthcare facilities and other public and private entities in Connecticut to divert mattresses from the solid waste stream. It will report the program's progress to DEEP each October.

"Working with all stakeholders, the industry has taken a major step toward creating a cost-effective solution to a long-term problem," said Ryan Trainer, president of MRC. "We designed Connecticut's program to increase the recycling of used mattress materials by leveraging the existing waste collection infrastructure. MRC is working with many types of businesses and industries to recycle their used mattresses through the program. The Connecticut resident benefits from the no-cost drop-off opportunities. This will both encourage more mattress recycling as well as discourage illegal dumping."

The program is funded through a \$9 recycling fee that is collected when a mattress or box spring is sold to Connecticut consumers. Consumers will notice this fee as a separate line item on their receipt. The fee is used to pay for transporting and recycling the discarded mattresses.

Similar recycling programs are expected to launch in California and Rhode Island in 2016. To learn more about Bye Bye Mattress visit www.byebyemattress.com.

Recycling Facts

Each year, 35 to 40 million new mattresses and box springs are sold in the United States, and at least 15 to 20 million used mattresses and box springs are discarded.

More than 80% of a used mattress' components can be recycled —the metal springs, foam, wood and fibers — and made into new useful products. For example:

- The steel springs are recycled as metal scrap and can be melted and used to make new appliances, building materials and other steel products.
- The foam can be turned into carpet underlayment or animal bed padding.
- The wooden frames can be shredded to produce landscaping mulch.
- The cotton and other fiber can be used in industrial oil filters and other textile applications.

The Recycling Process

Most recyclers currently use the following process to dismantle a mattress:

1. The top mattress layer (including the outer fabric) is cut, peeled and separated from the mattress' interior materials (which can include fiber, polyurethane or latex foam and steel springs).
2. The interior materials are pulled apart and separated by type.
3. Foam, fiber and other soft commodities are baled and compressed for transport to scrap dealers or companies that will consume them to make new products.
4. Metal springs from mattresses and box springs are extracted and sent to scrap recyclers that will sell them to steel mills and foundries.
5. Wood is chipped or shredded.