



NORTHERN CALIFORNIA RECYCLING ASSOCIATION

July , 2021

Assemblymember Luz M. Rivas, Chair Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Legislative Office Building, 1020 N Street, Room 164
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 244 (Archuleta) Lithium-ion Batteries: Illegal Disposal & Fire Prevention - Support

Dear Assemblymember Luz M. Rivas,

NCRA expresses our support for SB 244, which would require CalRecycle to create a guidance document promoting the proper disposal of lithium-ion batteries, as well as require the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to develop a model protocol for lithium-ion battery fire detection, handling, and suppression for the solid waste industry.

The Northern California Recycling Association (NCRA) is a non-profit organization founded in 1978, primarily to promote environmentally sound discards management practices, including waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting. Our 350 members include recycling businesses, employees, entrepreneurs, and individuals supportive of various Bay Area and State Zero Waste initiatives.

According to CalRecycle, California consumes 64 million lithium-ion (Li-ion) batteries every year, of which an estimated 75 to 92% are improperly disposed of. With the number of Li-ion batteries expected to double in the next seven years, the quantity of Li-ion batteries and products entering the waste stream will only increase, which poses a very serious fire, health, and safety hazard to the recycling and waste industries.

When Li-ion batteries experience intense physical pressure, which is common in California's waste processing systems, the batteries can spark a fire or even explode. According to Fire Rover's November 2020 report, over 1,800 fires were experienced at Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) and other solid waste and recycling facilities in the US and Canada in the prior 12 months, including "22 reported injuries and three deaths that can either be directly or indirectly attributed to these fire incidents".

According to Resource Recycling (March 16, 2020) "As has been well-reported, fires attributed to lithium-ion batteries are becoming a major problem for MRFs. More and more of these batteries enter the waste stream, leading to explosions and thermal incidents both on recycling trucks and in recycling centers... With more facility fires of greater severity, insurance

companies are shelling out much more than they are taking in on premiums and are subsequently unwilling to renew their policies”.

Towards mitigating the escalating risks and hazards of improper disposal of Li-ion batteries, SB 244 requirements would include the following:

- Requires relevant state agencies and stakeholders to develop a model protocol and training that identifies best practices for the detection and suppression of fires that originate from discarded Li-ion batteries and contained within products, for collection vehicles, transfer or processing stations, and disposal facilities.
- Requires a solid waste enterprise to adopt such a protocol and arrange training for relevant employees on procedures for the detection and suppression of fires in collection vehicles, transfer or processing stations, and disposal facilities.
- Requires CalRecycle to develop a guidance document for use by local governments to increase public awareness as to the proper handling of Li-ion batteries and contained in products, and the risk of fire due to their improper disposal.
- Authorizes CalRecycle to publish on its Website, or issue any materials necessary for disseminating information, including existing or updated guidance developed by DTSC pursuant to the Universal Waste Regulations, or to the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Act of 2006.
- Prohibits a person from knowingly disposing of a Li-ion battery in any container or receptacle unless it is designated for the collection of batteries for recycling.

For reasons including the above, NCRA supports SB 244. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at ncrarecycles@gmail.com. Thank you.

Sincerely,

K. D. Brooms

K. Douglas Brooms

Both Co-Chairs of NCRA Zero Waste Advocacy Committee

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Cc: Senator Bob Archuleta

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