

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

March 23, 2021

Supporting Extended Producer Responsibility for Batteries

According to North America’s premier battery and cell phone product stewardship organization, Call2Recycle, California consumes 64 million Lithium-ion batteries every year, of which 75-92% are improperly disposed of. When improperly discarded in the trash or recycling, batteries and battery-embedded products can cause disastrous explosions and fires that pose a serious threat to workers, communities, and waste management infrastructure. Batteries are one of the top fire-causing products in the materials management system. According to Fire Rover, over 1,700 fires at Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) in the US and Canada are caused by batteries annually.

Currently, California residents only have access to free collection of rechargeable batteries and cellphones. The public lacks free and convenient access to recycle all battery types which leads to improper disposal. Producers are currently externalizing the costs to manage their products at end-of-life onto local governments and ratepayers. Los Angeles County collects over 75 tons of batteries each year through our household hazardous waste program. Roughly 12-14 tons are collected in kiosks placed at County

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libraries, at a cost of over \$50,000 annually, so keeping harmful batteries from being improperly disposed can cost over \$4,000 per ton to local governments.

SB 289, known as the Battery and Battery-Embedded Product Recycling and Fire Risk Reduction Act and authored by Senator Newman, would alleviate some of these costs to local governments by requiring producers to establish a stewardship program for batteries and battery-embedded products. The bill requires easily accessible collection bins; acceptance of loose and product-embedded batteries for common household battery types; and for producers to develop, finance, and implement a program to recover and recycle their products.

Convenient, cost effective collection and recycling programs reduce strain on critical waste management infrastructure and protect the workers that help keep our communities clean and ensure that the County is able to meet our environmental sustainability goals.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct Los Angeles County's legislative advocates in Sacramento to support SB 289, which would expand convenient battery recycling options for County Residents while reducing the risk of fires caused by improperly disposed batteries and protect the health and safety of critical waste industry workers.

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