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Environmental & Business Groups Applaud Signage of Law Overhauling California's Carpet Recycling Program

Groups Thank Governor Newsom for Signing the Bill, Reclaiming \$15M in Consumer Carpet Recycling Fees to Support California Businesses

SACRAMENTO – Yesterday, Governor Gavin Newsom signed [AB 729](#), legislation that paves the way for the state to reclaim over \$15 million in carpet recycling fees used to support California carpet collection and recycling businesses, protecting its recycling infrastructure from the carpet recycling program administrator, Carpet America Recovery Effort (CARE), which is headquartered in Georgia.



Figure 1 - Heidi Sanborn Executive Director NSAC giving Assemblymember Kansen Chu (D-San Jose) 2018 Legislative Leadership Award

“It’s time to stop CARE from pulling the rug out from under California’s carpet recycling program. For the past eight years, CARE has made the same excuses collecting fee money paid by California consumers, while failing to meet legislated recycling requirements,” **explained Heidi Sanborn, Executive Director of the National Stewardship Action Council (NSAC) and sponsor of AB 729.** “CARE’s latest Plan continues with the same excuses, and there’s reason to believe CARE will be revoked as the program administrator, jeopardizing the state’s ability to retrieve over \$15 million in California consumer fees it has accrued.”

Assemblymember Kansen Chu (D-San Jose) said, “AB 729 improves a program that is very crucial to California meeting its recycling goal, reducing our carbon footprint and leading the way in extended producer responsibility programs.” “California’s carpet stewardship program is the first of its kind in the country and with the reforms in AB 729, the State and program will have the tools they need to reach our recycling goals. I’m grateful to the Governor, the bill’s sponsor and advocates for their tireless work to make this program a model for the nation.”

Carpets are comprised of 99% plastic, made from fossil fuels. In 2016 alone, over 257 million pounds of carpets were dumped in landfills (about 2% of total disposed) and over 20 million pounds were burned in incinerators, just in California. Carpet production is projected to grow 4.5% annually to 14.6 billion square feet by 2019 in the U.S., increasing the amount of carpet to be handled at end-of-life.



In 2010 California became the only government in the world to require carpet manufacturers to implement a stewardship program to increase the recycling of carpet (AB 2398, Perez). In 2017, California passed AB 1158 which reformed the program by mandating the industry increase the rate of carpet recycling to rate 24% by 2020, ending the consumer subsidization of carpet incineration, incentivizing the production of more recyclable carpets, and providing proper training for carpet installers.

“California-based recyclers and manufacturers using post-consumer carpet rely on consumer-generated financial incentives provided under the state’s carpet stewardship program. They cannot risk the unnecessary disruption to their payments that could occur if the collected funds are held up during a transition of the stewardship organization,” **said Mike Tinney, a recycling markets consultant.** “AB 729 eliminates the risk of incentives stopping while ensuring costs required to recycle various carpet types are visible to the consumer.”

“Interface applauds the passage and signing of AB729 because it safeguards recycling program fees in the event of organizational change, ensuring program stability and ease in carpet recycling,” **said Eric Nelson, Vice-President of Interface carpet.** “A sustainably-funded program means less waste in our landfills and a more circular economy in California.”

“Governor Newsom’s signature on AB 729 is vital to guaranteeing that California’s carpet recycling jobs are protected, and that California remains the unquestioned leader at passing landmark environmental legislation that serve as models for the nation to follow,” **added Sanborn.**

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National Action Stewardship Council (NASC) was founded in 2015 as an affiliate of the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC). NSAC is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organizations that will engage primarily in lobbying and advocacy work for EPR and Product Stewardship, anywhere in the U.S. and at any level of government interested in legislation that drives a circular economy.