

Guest Column: Recycling mattresses is a good option for Del Norte County residents

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In Del Norte County, the Mattress Recycling Council's Bye Bye Mattress program is a successful resource for residents and businesses to recycle mattresses, helping to save space in local landfills and prevent mattresses from being dumped on local roadways, along coastal areas and other public spaces. We're pleased to offer this service, especially in a rural area where access to recycling can be more challenging than urban areas in the state.

Since 2016, the Bye Bye Mattress program has been operating in California, building a vast network to remove mattresses, box springs and most recently futons from the waste stream and turn them into everyday products. This is done by deconstructing and separating them into their different components, such as steel, wood and foam, where they can then be repurposed in products such as garden mulch, carpet padding and even household appliances. More than 75% of a mattress can be recycled.

So far we have seen great success, recycling 7 million mattresses – including 6,119 in Del Norte County – since our launch in the state and diverting more than 230 million pounds of waste from landfills.

There are three ways Del Norte County residents can recycle their mattresses and contribute to this success. The easiest is to have a retailer take an old mattress when delivering a new one. It's state law that all retailers, even those using carriers such as FedEx and UPS, offer this service at no additional cost.

Del Norte County residents can also recycle their mattresses through curbside waste collection. Recology Del Norte offers no-cost bulky item pick up twice a year for both single family and multifamily households. We work with Recology to ensure mattresses collected through this program are recycled through Bye Bye Mattress.

Finally, the Bye Bye Mattress network consists of more than 200 permanent collection sites around California, serving all 58 counties with access to no-cost drop off points for mattresses. This includes Humboldt Moving & Storage in Crescent City, which provides the service to residents and businesses on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Collection sites are also augmented by collection events. You can find more information at ByeByeMattress.com.

These efforts are funded by a \$10.50 fee assessed on every new mattress purchase in California. This not only helps us build our collection network, but also to ensure Californians are aware of the resources that are available to them, support communities with addressing hotspots for illegal mattress dumping and fund research that helps improve mattress recycling efficiency and develops more uses for recycled mattress products.

As the Bye Bye Mattress program grows, so do our efforts to provide more opportunities to recycle mattresses. This includes developing new, creative relationships with local nonprofits and small businesses to join our network as collection sites. It's part of our commitment to expand access so we can better support California's global leadership in environmental stewardship.

Mattress recycling is key to preserving Del Norte County's natural beauty. The more mattresses that enter the program, the fewer that end up in landfills or illegally dumped. Together we can all do our part to keep our community green and clean.

Tim Stockett is the Mattress Recycling Council representative for Del Norte County.