ASSEMBLY BILL No. 2633

Introduced by Assembly Member Allen

February 21, 2014

An act relating to solid waste.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2633, as introduced, Allen. Recycling: plastic material.

Existing law requires the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery to administer state programs to recycle solid waste, plastic trash bags, plastic packaging containers, waste tires, newsprint, and other specified materials.

The existing California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 requires each city, county, city and county, and regional agency, if any, to develop a source reduction and recycling element of an integrated waste management plan containing specified components. On and after January 1, 2000, the element is required to divert 50% of the solid waste subject to the element, except as specified, through source reduction, recycling, and composting activities.

This bill would declare the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would utilize the technology available to cost-effectively address management of solid waste and maximize the value recovered from reusable plastic material by, among other things, investigating emerging technologies that convert used plastic products into new plastic feedstock, such as propylene monomer.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) California's goal of diverting not less than 75 percent of solid waste, including plastic products, from landfills does not take into account that landfills will continue to be the only disposal alternative for many plastic products.

(b) Existing law and current policies do not recognize new technologies that are available to maximize the reusable lifespan of plastic products and that are integral to meeting the state's diversion goals. The new technologies and policies could address several obstacles the state currently faces with regard to plastic products, including the multicomponent construction in plastic products, as in plastic containers with integral caps and valves, usage history of plastic products, such as nonhazardous used hospital coverings, contamination levels of the plastic products, such as food service wastes and plastic products used for floor cleaning, and the diversity of plastic grades, or types of plastic, within each plastic material class.

(c) According to the federal Environmental Protection Agency, in 2011, 13.1 million tons of textiles ended up in landfills, an increase of 44 percent from 1999, while only 2 million tons were diverted from landfills. The low diversion percentage is largely due to the multicomponent nature of many textiles that are in the landfills. Further, 60 percent of textiles that end up in landfills are PET polyester, the same material of which plastic beverage containers are made.

SEC. 2. It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would utilize technology available to cost-effectively address the management of solid waste and maximize the value recovered from reusable plastic products by doing the following:

(a) Provide incentives to businesses and organizations that practice state-of-the-art, cost-effective material separation and recovery techniques to locate recycling centers in California.

(b) Investigate emerging technologies that convert used plastic products into new plastic feedstock, such as propylene monomer.

(c) Encourage waste-to-energy and waste-to-fuel pyrolysis projects that address the various grades of plastic products that are in landfills.

(d) Complement the state and international trend towards biodegradation by encouraging the use of anaerobic digesters and landfills as available venues for anaerobic biodegradation of plastic products that are embedded with new biodegradable technology. This usage of anaerobic digesters and landfills will result in the release of additional biogas that can be captured and used as renewable energy.

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