



March 8, 2021

Senator Benjamin Allen,
 California State Senate, 26th District
 State Capitol, Room 4076
 Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR SB 343 (Allen) – Truth in Recycling Labeling

Dear Senator Allen:

We, the undersigned, write to record our support for your bill, Senate Bill 343 (Allen), the Truth in Recycling Labeling Bill, which will end consumer confusion about which materials are suitable for the recycling bin, and reduce contamination in the recycling system.

Most consumers lack a clear understanding of what is recyclable or acceptable to put in the curbside “blue bin” and dutifully fill their bins with materials they believe are recyclable, especially when the material displays the “chasing arrows” recycling symbol. However, due to misinformation by labeling tactics, most materials have been falsely considered “recyclable” by consumers. This confusion contaminates and overwhelms the recycling stream, which places an incredible strain on local recycling and waste collection systems, and leads to a less efficient, more expensive system that falls to local jurisdictions and their ratepayers. This is further exacerbated by the confusion caused by the plastic resin identification coding system (RIC), which was introduced in 1988. The RIC is the number code (1-7), that is displayed on plastic packaging, intended to be used by waste facilities to properly sort the different types of plastic. However, the chasing arrows symbol that typically surrounds the RIC falsely conveys recyclability and leads to widespread confusion for consumers when they are sorting their waste into different bins. Despite consumers dutifully placing their materials in the blue bin, less than 15 percent of single-use plastic is actually recycled, with the remainder landfilled, incinerated, or dumped into the environment.

Manufacturers have used this confusion to their advantage by greenwashing unrecyclable products and confusing consumers. According to a recent report by the [Statewide Commission on Recycling Markets and Curbside Recycling](#), “Since consumers equate the 'recycle' word and symbol with what is accepted in curbside recycling bins, the 'recycle' word and symbol must be reserved for materials which are accepted in curbside bins and do not cause contamination.” Consumers need a reliable way of knowing what is truly recyclable.

SB 343 extends the existing “Truth in Environmental Advertising” law that prohibits the use of the word “recyclable” on unrecyclable products and the use of the “chasing arrows” symbol or any other suggestion that a material is recyclable. The use of the word “recyclable” and the “chasing arrow” symbol will be reserved for the materials that are truly recycled in most California communities and is routinely sold to manufacturers to make new products. The Department of Resources and Recycling and Recover (CalRecycle) will, through regulations, determine which materials are truly recyclable and publish a list of acceptable material types on its website. The bill includes a process for producers of material that do not yet meet the criteria to demonstrate a commitment to increasing the collection, sorting, and recycling of their material – allowing them to continue to encourage consumers to put their material in the blue bins.

SB 343 will reduce contamination in the recycling system, lower the costs for local governments and ratepayers, and empower consumers to make informed purchasing choices based on a product’s recyclability. This will encourage producers to make sustainable packaging choices, and support companies looking for a steady supply of material to invest in recycling and reprocessing facilities in California.

For these reasons, we strongly support SB 343. Thank you for authoring this important measure.

Sincerely,



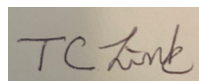
Heidi Sanborn, Executive Director
National Stewardship Action Council



Beverly Hanstrom, CEO/Owner
Colorado Medical Waste



Nick Lapis, Director of Advocacy
Californians Against Waste



Teri Cohan Link
LINKCO Inc



David Stitzhal, President
Full Circle Environmental



Katherine O'Dea, Executive Director
Save Our Shores



Martin Bourque, MA, Executive Director
Ecology Center



Miho Ligare, Plastic Pollution Policy
Coordinator
Surfrider Foundation



Anna Cummins, Interim Executive Director
& Co-Founder
The 5 Gyres Institute



Hernan de la Vega, CEO
PreZero



Darby Hoover, Senior Resource Specialist
NRDC



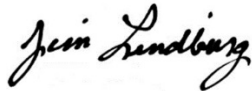
Emily Rusch, Executive Director
CALPIRG



Charles Helget, Director, Government
Affairs
Republic Services



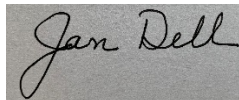
Michael Gross, Director of Sustainability
Zanker Recycling



Jim Lindburg, Legislative Consultant
Friends Committee on Legislation of
California



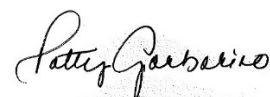
Eric Zetz, Director
Merced County Regional Waste
Management Authority



Jan Dell, Independent Engineer
The Last Beach Cleanup



Laura Anthony, Program Coordinator
Save the Albatross Coalition



Patty Garbarino, President
Marin Sanitary Service



Emily Parker, Coastal and Marine Scientist
Heal the Bay



Lauren Cullum, Policy Advocate
Sierra Club California



Joe La Mariana, Executive Director
RethinkWaste



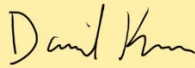
Dianna Cohen, Chief Executive Officer
Plastic Pollution Coalition



Christopher Chin, Executive Director
The Center for Oceanic Awareness,
Research, and Education (COARE)



Leslie Mintz Tamminen, Director
Seventh Generation Advisors



David Krueger, President
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Miriam Gordon, Policy Director
UPSTREAM



Melissa Romero, Legislative Affairs
Manager
California League of Conservation Voters