

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## A New Purpose for an Old Mattress

There's nothing like that first restful night's sleep on a new mattress. But have you ever wondered what happens to your old mattress and box spring, the one you so lovingly discarded or paid the furniture company to haul "away"?

In California alone, 4.2 million mattresses and box springs are landfilled each year, taking up large amounts of space (mattresses and box springs are difficult to compact) and creating flammable air pockets and potentially dangerous conditions for landfill workers.

However, if you are a Tehama County resident, chances are your mattress and box spring was recycled, not landfilled. The Tehama County/Red Bluff Landfill proudly boasts many waste diversion programs about which other counties can only dream. Each day, landfill workers divert recyclable materials ranging from common cardboard and plastics to carpet, alkaline batteries, mattresses and box springs from the landfill.



Mattresses and box springs at the Tehama County/Red Bluff Landfill are stacked until landfill workers load them into trailers for transport to an Oakland recycling center.

With the passage of a new law in California in 2013, a statewide mattress and box spring recycling program was established. Beginning in December 2015 any mattress or box spring purchased in California included a recycling fee to pay for the recovery of the mattress or box spring at the end of its useful life. The Mattress Recycling Council (MRC), a nonprofit stewardship organization made up of manufacturers and retailers of mattresses and box springs, oversees the program. MRC works with retailers of mattresses, as well as solid waste facilities, which serve as collection locations for used mattresses and box springs.

Tehama County's mattress and box spring recycling program began much earlier, in July of 2009, serving as a pilot program for rural California counties in the North State. Each mattress and box spring recycled by Tehama County eventually ends up in Woodland, where the St. Vincent de Paul Society, a non-profit organization that employs individuals with employment

barriers and donates all proceeds to services for low-income, homeless and at-risk individuals, breaks down the mattresses and box springs into its various components. These components, which include cotton, foam, wood and steel, are baled and shipped for material recycling.

On average, approximately 85 percent of the material in mattresses and box springs is recyclable, but less than 5% of mattresses and box springs ever make it to a reuse or recycling facility. The California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) estimates that the reuse and recycling of all 4.2 million mattresses and box springs currently landfilled in California annually would create a total of 1,000 new California jobs and reduce greenhouse gases.

Since the program's implementation in 2009 until the end of 2015, Tehama County had recycled over 16,000 mattresses and box springs. As a result of an agreement between the landfill and MRC beginning January 1, 2016, mattresses and box springs are now accepted free of charge. In 2016 alone, over 5,800 mattresses and box springs were brought in to be recycled. That is a huge increase over previous years. The overall result of all this effort: minimizing how much our mountain of trash grows. That is progress everyone in Tehama County can be proud of!

If you have any questions regarding this recycling program or would like information about other programs, please contact the Tehama County Solid Waste Management Agency at (530) 528-1103, visit their website [www.tehamacountylandfill.com](http://www.tehamacountylandfill.com) or send them an email [tehamacountyrecycles@co.tehama.ca.us](mailto:tehamacountyrecycles@co.tehama.ca.us).