

## ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 1153 (Bonta)

As Amended January 22, 2026

Majority vote

**SUMMARY**

This bill authorizes the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) to, upon appropriation, fund the removal and disposal of an abandoned recreational vehicle (RV), the development of enforcement strategies, and the development of local enforcement teams and illegal dumping enforcement officers. The bill requires CalRecycle to prioritize projects in disadvantaged communities when implementing this bill.

**Major Provisions****COMMENTS**

- 1) *Illegal dumping.* Illegal dumping is the act of disposing of solid waste at a location that is not a permitted solid waste facility. In California, illegal dumping is often done for economic gain, either by individuals who opt to dump their own waste illegally to avoid paying disposal fees or by illegitimate “junk hauling” entities that collect waste for disposal for a fee, but don’t haul the material to a permitted facility. Illegal dumping poses significant social, environmental, and economic impacts statewide. According to CalRecycle, local governments spend tens of millions of dollars annually to remove illegally dumped materials, and private property owners incur significant costs to clean up illegal dumping on private lands. Once a site has illegally dumped material, the site tends to grow in size and becomes more difficult to abate.

Most local governments treat illegal dumping as a nuisance/litter issue rather than a violation of solid waste laws. The methods used by local governments to manage illegal dumping vary widely. Local and state law enforcement entities will cite people caught illegally dumping, but those agencies are not responsible for cleanup programs. No single state or local agency is given responsibility for a comprehensive program to combat littering and illegal dumping. CalRecycle is responsible for investigation, cleanup, and enforcement of sites that qualify as illegal solid waste disposal sites and shares this responsibility with local enforcement agencies.

In spite of state and local efforts, illegal dumping is increasing in many parts of the state. For example, reports of illegal dumping soared early this year compared to the same period in 2024. According to data compiled by Crosstown LA, there were 22,046 reports of trash, furniture, and other debris illegally disposed in the months of January and February, compared to 16,212 last year over the same two-month period.

- 2) *Illegal dumping technical advisory committee (IDTAC).* CalRecycle established a state and local technical advisory committee in 2006 to assess the extent of illegal dumping and to develop recommendations to improve the effectiveness of local and regional responses to the problem. Originally established as a task force, the group developed recommendations that were presented to the former California Integrated Waste Management Board in 2007. IDTAC is comprised of local government entities, state government entities, nonprofit

organizations, and others. The Illegal Dumping Toolbox was created by the IDTAC to provide resources to local governments to help combat illegal dumping.

In 2020, IDTAC completed a Work Plan to develop new and expanded resources and objectives to address illegal dumping. The Work Plan includes priorities and objectives in three areas: enforcement, outreach, and standards. In addition to the Work Plan, the IDTAC has focused on, and provides information to local governments and the public about, the topics of homeless encampments and abandoned vehicles.

- 3) *Abandoned vehicles.* Abandoned vehicle abatement efforts encompass everything from motorcycles to ships. This bill is focused on the abatement of abandoned RVs. According to the US Department of Justice's *Problem Oriented Guide for Police: Problem Specific Guides: Abandoned Vehicles*, factors that contribute to abandonment include the costs of operating and maintaining vehicles, regulation and licensing requirements, and other circumstances, such as using them for shelter and difficulty associated with removal.

Unlike other forms of illegal dumping, removal of abandoned vehicles is complex and requires numerous steps. Vehicles are personal property, and there are constitutional and other laws governing their removal. Generally, abandoned vehicles must be tagged or cited, efforts must be undertaken to identify and notice the owner, and specified time periods must pass before they can be removed. Upon removal, they are generally stored for some time before being dismantled or disposed. RVs often require specialized towing and are more costly to remove and store than cars, and costs vary depending on their size, condition, and location. According to one removal service, costs vary from around \$500 to \$2500 for removal. Estimates for the dismantling of inoperable RVs range from approximately \$5,000 to \$9,000 per vehicle.

- 4) *Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program.* The CHP's AVA Program was designed to provide guidance for counties that wish to develop and administer AVA authorities. The AVA Program provides a means to remove abandoned vehicles that create a public nuisance or a health and safety hazard. There are currently 37 counties participating in the AVA Program, and additional counties have expressed interest in sample plans to develop local plans that conform to program guidelines. Counties participating in the program are eligible for funding for the removal of abandoned vehicles using funding from a \$1 vehicle registration fee for all vehicles registered within the county.
- 5) *Solid Waste Disposal and Codisposal Site Cleanup Program.* CalRecycle administers this cleanup program, which allocates \$1 million annually for public entities to fund illegally disposed waste removal and disposal, security measures (i.e., fences, signs, etc.), and health and safety measures associated with the cleanup. Grant awards are limited to \$50,000 per applicant per year.
- 6) *Farm and Ranch Solid Waste Cleanup and Abatement Program.* CalRecycle administers a grant program to eligible cities, counties, resource conservation districts, and Native American tribes for the cleanup and abatement of illegal dumping on farm and ranch properties. Funding for this program is limited to \$1 million each fiscal year. Grants are limited to \$50,000 per site and \$200,000 per applicant per year.

**According to the Author**

Across California, the growing number of abandoned recreational vehicles (RVs) is creating significant public health, safety, and environmental hazards in our communities. Currently, local governments lack adequate resources and authority to properly address the removal and disposal of these vehicles. The cost to dismantle and dispose of RVs can reach up to \$9,000 per vehicle, far exceeding what most cities can absorb in their illegal dumping budgets.

This bill will help protect our communities, improve public safety, and ensure clean and accessible streets for everyone—especially in neighborhoods that have historically been overburdened by illegal dumping and environmental neglect.

**Arguments in Support**

According to a coalition of local government organizations:

The California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 requires the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) to initiate a program to pay for the cleanup of solid waste disposal sites and solid waste at codisposal sites where no responsible party is available to pay for timely remediation, and where cleanup is needed to protect public health and safety or the environment. Paid from the Solid Waste Disposal Site Cleanup Trust Fund, CalRecycle's Solid Waste Site Cleanup Program utilizes the funding to provide grants or loans to local, state, or federal governments, certified local enforcement agencies, or directly manage and fund cleanup projects. AB 1153 (Bonta) expands the activities eligible for funding under this grant program to include enforcement strategies, local enforcement officers and teams, and the removal and disposal of recreational vehicles.

CSAC, RCRC, and Cal Cities support AB 1153 (Bonta), however, additional funding is needed for this grant program to address the growing need for financial assistance from local jurisdictions for the purposes of illegal disposal site abatement including the costly management of abandoned vehicles.

**Arguments in Opposition**

None on file

**FISCAL COMMENTS**

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

- 1) Ongoing cost pressure of an unknown but potentially significant amount, possibly in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, to fund the removal and disposal of abandoned RVs and for the other purposes stated in the bill. As discussed below, removing abandoned RVs may require specialized equipment, with costs ranging from \$500 to \$2,500 per vehicle. Estimates for the dismantling of inoperable RVs range from approximately \$5,000 to \$9,000 per vehicle. Funding for the proposed program is subject to appropriation by the Legislature.
- 2) CalRecycle estimates ongoing annual costs of approximately \$150,000 for one new position (General Fund or special fund) to develop grant program criteria and application materials, implement the grant program, and provide ongoing assistance to grantees.

## **VOTES**

### **ASM NATURAL RESOURCES: 14-0-0**

**YES:** Bryan, Alanis, Connolly, Ellis, Flora, Garcia, Haney, Hoover, Kalra, Muratsuchi, Pellerin, Schultz, Wicks, Zbur

### **ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-0-4**

**YES:** Wicks, Stefani, Calderon, Caloza, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Bauer-Kahan, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Hoover, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

## **UPDATED**

VERSION: January 22, 2025

CONSULTANT: Elizabeth MacMillan / NAT. RES. /

FN: 0002265