

\$20,000 for a third or subsequent violation. (PEN 374.3(h)(2))

- 6) Requires a person convicted of illegal dumping in commercial quantities to pay for the removal of the waste matter. (PEN 374.3(h)(3))
- 7) Requires the court to notify the relevant licensing or permitting entity, if the violator holds a business license or permit and if the waste matter dumped was in commercial quantities, and requires the entity to make that information publicly available. (PEN 374.3(h)(4))
- 8) Requires the court to consider the defendant's ability to pay when issuing fines for illegal dumping. (PEN 374.3(j))
- 9) Requires DMV to renew vehicle registrations on an annual basis. (VEH 4601.5)
- 10) Imposes various fees for purposes including the registration of vehicles which must be paid in-full at the time of registration. (VEH 4602)
- 11) Requires DMV to refuse to renew the registration of a vehicle if the owner has not paid relevant fees and taxes. (VEH 4750)
- 12) Requires DMV to refuse to renew the registration of a vehicle if the registered owner or lessee of the vehicle has outstanding parking violation fines and has been notified as such, unless the registered owner or lessee can meet certain qualifications. (VEH 4760)
- 13) Requires DMV to refuse to renew the registration of a vehicle if the registered owner or lessee of the vehicle has outstanding toll evasion violations and has been notified as such, unless the registered owner or lessee can meet certain qualifications. (VEH 4770)

This bill:

- 1) Requires DMV to refuse to renew the registration of a vehicle if the registered owner or lessee of the vehicle has outstanding illegal dumping fines and has been notified as such.
- 2) Allows the registered owner or lessee to pay the outstanding illegal dumping fines as part of their registration application.

- 3) Requires DMV to allow vehicle registration by a renter or lessor if they provide DMV with a notice of disposition of the illegal dumping violations.
- 4) Requires the court to issue a notice of disposition of the illegal dumping violation if the renter or lessor provides information to the court showing that a rentee or lessee was operating the vehicle when the violation was issued.
- 5) Requires DMV to allow the vehicle registration if the illegal dumping violation was issued before the registered owner took possession of the vehicle.
- 6) Requires DMV to allow a registered owner or lessee who has outstanding illegal dumping fines to file a certificate of non-operation, even if they are currently on an active payment plan to repay the fines.

COMMENTS:

- 1) *Purpose of the bill.* According to the author “Illegal dumping remains a persistent problem throughout California communities, yet local governments lack effective enforcement tools to ensure that individuals cited for dumping actually pay their fines. Current law allows citations and penalties for illegal dumping, but many offenders simply ignore them. For example, between 2021 and 2024 the City of Oakland issued nearly 3,000 illegal dumping citations totaling approximately \$1.3 million, yet only about \$109,000, roughly 11%, has been collected. Similarly, local governments across the Bay Area continue to struggle with enforcement even as they expand cleanup and prevention programs. In San José, illegal dumping persists despite increased bulky-item pickup services and additional “dumpster days,” illustrating that cleanup programs alone cannot solve the problem without stronger accountability measures. SB 1218 addresses this enforcement gap by linking unpaid illegal dumping citations to vehicle registration renewal through the Department of Motor Vehicles”
- 2) *The problem of illegal dumping.* Illegal dumping is the unauthorized disposal of solid waste matter such as mattresses, tires, appliances, or construction debris, on public or private property. It is often done to avoid the inconvenience and costs associated with taking trash, especially large, bulky items, to proper waste disposal sites. Illegal dumping ranges from individuals leaving unwanted furniture on the sidewalk, to businesses dumping large quantities of waste matter on the outskirts of town, to contractors leaving unwanted or unused construction materials near worksites.

Regardless of the source, the effects of dumping are costly, generating

significant social, environmental, and economic impacts. Illegal dumping contributes to a sense that an area is deteriorating, often prompting concerns from business owners and residents about increases in other forms of crime in the area. Dumped materials also block properties or roadways, contaminate the local environment, and contribute to general pollution in the area. Furthermore, many of these effects are felt disproportionately by low-income communities and communities of color. Effects are also not relegated to any single part of California, as illegal dumping is a persistent problem in urban, suburban, and rural communities. As a result, local governments and private property owners across the state spend millions of dollars annually to clean up illegal dump sites.¹

Although the problem of illegal dumping has existed for decades, amounts of illegal dumping have surged in recent years. Nowhere perhaps illustrates this more clearly than the City of Oakland, where illegal dumping increased 20% between 2023 and 2024 alone.² In 2025, the city reported spending \$12 million on clean-up efforts, picking up 12,000 tons of illegally dumped material.³ On the enforcement side, since 2021 the city has issued over 3,000 illegal dumping citations totaling roughly \$1.3 million.⁴

- 3) *Combating illegal dumping.* Many different strategies have been employed across California to curtail illegal dumping. At the state level, state law defines illegal dumping as a crime and outlines an escalating fine structure for illegal dumping violations (PEN 374.3). Depending on the quantities of material disposed, the types of material disposed, and whether or not the dumping is done in association with a business, the law also provides for cases in which the dumping is a misdemeanor punishable by jail time, requires the violator to pay for the removal of the dumped material, and lays out actions professional licensing boards may take against violators.

Beyond state law, many local jurisdictions have their own ordinances that deal with illegal dumping. Most often these simply implement state law, but some provide for additional punishments including further administrative or clean-up fees, or the seizure of vehicles involved in repeat offenses.

Many strategies also exist to deter and remediate illegal dumping activity. In 2019, Alameda County (in which Oakland resides) released a report⁵ detailing

¹ <https://www.ktvu.com/news/new-state-bill-could-curb-illegal-dumping>

² https://district4.alamedacountyca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2025/10/Illegal-Dumping-Solutions-Report_FINAL.pdf

³ <https://www.ktvu.com/news/new-state-bill-could-curb-illegal-dumping>

⁴ <https://www.ktvu.com/news/oakland-issued-1-3m-illegal-dumping-citations-collected-hardly-anything>

⁵ https://district4.acgov.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2021/07/ACID-FinalReport_2020_NateMiley.pdf

the results of a pilot program they ran aimed at addressing illegal dumping. The pilot focused on the implementation of the “Three E’s” strategy: Education, Eradication, and Enforcement. Under these efforts, the county, among other tactics, used cameras to identify violators in common dumping areas, provided free waste disposal sites, put up bollards to physically block dumping activity, engaged in public education campaigns about the harms of illegal dumping, assisted community clean-up efforts, and increased monitoring and enforcement activity around dumping violations.

Ultimately, based on the experience with the pilot, the report recommended a number of strategies for tackling illegal dumping, including more focus on enforcing existing laws, utilizing camera-based enforcement, and reducing barriers to eradication.

- 4) *Issues in implementation.* Despite the promising findings from the Alameda County report and others like it, illegal dumping remains an issue. In Alameda County in particular, illegal dumping continues to worsen. This has led many to question the effectiveness of the strategies used to date. For instance, camera enforcement was once seen as a silver bullet for tackling the issue by deterring would be dumpers due to the certainty of being identified. However, in recent years the effectiveness of cameras has plateaued, as repeat dumpers have started obscuring or removing license plates, or simply moving to dump in areas without cameras.

Issues have also been raised about fines and fees, which remain the bedrock of illegal dumping enforcement. Equity concerns regarding the ability of low-income individuals to pay increasingly steep fines have led cities such as Oakland to adopt pay deferral programs, allowing for people to challenge fines, enroll in payment plans, or pay off fines with community service. On top of rampant fine evasion by many offenders, this has created a situation where the city was only able to collect roughly 11% of all fines issued in 2025.⁶

As a result, local governments have been looking at other strategies for combating illegal dumping, however many of these come with their own downsides. Increased patrols by law enforcement are costly and have the potential to provoke escalatory situations in the community. Towing and vehicle seizures risk jeopardizing the livelihoods of low-income individuals for whom a vehicle is their lifeline. Increased criminal penalties are difficult to implement and often highly controversial.

⁶ <https://www.ktvu.com/news/oakland-issued-1-3m-illegal-dumping-citations-collected-hardly-anything>

- 5) *SB 1218 seeks to strike a balance.* SB 1218 provides a new enforcement mechanism modeled after existing mechanisms for enforcing parking violations. This bill would require DMV to refuse to renew a vehicle registration if the registered owner has outstanding illegal dumping fines. Similar provisions already exist in state law for unpaid parking violations (VEH 4760) and toll fees (VEH 4770). In fact, this bill’s language is nearly an exact mirror of the statute regarding unpaid parking violations.

Writing in support of this bill, the City of Oakland notes “[Illegal dumping] is a persistent public health, environmental, and quality-of-life crisis in Oakland and across California. Abandoned debris attracts additional dumping, creates fire hazards, blocks sidewalks, harms local businesses, and disproportionately impacts low-income communities and communities of color. SB 1218 provides a straightforward and proven solution.”

- 6) *Deterrence or fee recovery?* A key question about this bill is whether the primary impact will be to deter illegal dumping, or increase the illegal dumping fee recovery rate for cities like Oakland. As noted above, only a small percentage of illegal dumping fees are typically recovered. This bill would theoretically increase that rate by further incentivizing fee payment through the link to vehicle registration. Additionally, this bill would authorize DMV to collect these fees, potentially reducing issues with actual fee collection. However, these solutions may not necessarily deter further illegal dumping activity.

For instance, the mechanism proposed in this bill may not target the worst offenders. Those who engage in the most illegal dumping are already routinely avoiding fee payment, racking up fees of several thousands of dollars, and are currently engaging in long-term campaigns of fee avoidance. Thus, in these cases, the prospect of either increased vehicle registration cost or illegally operating an unregistered vehicle may not be an effective deterrent. Therefore, it is unclear the exact effect on illegal dumping that this bill will have.

RELATED/PREVIOUS LEGISLATION:

AB 2310 (Carrillo, 2026) – Would make it a crime to transport waste matter for the purposes of illegal dumping. The bill would add “construction debris” to the list of waste matter that is illegal to dump. The bill would add additional penalties for persons guilty of a fourth illegal dumping violation and for dumping in commercial quantities in excess of 25 and 50 cubic yards. *This bill is pending in Assembly Public Safety Committee.*

SB 1230 (Valladares, 2026) – Would increase the fines for all illegal dumping penalties and require the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery to establish a website with resources to help cities combat illegal dumping. *This bill is pending in Senate Public Safety Committee.*

AB 1153 (Bonta, 2025) – Would, among other things, allow the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery to spend funds on illegal dumping enforcement officers. *This bill is pending in Senate Rules Committee.*

SB 1359 (Wilk, 2024) – Would have, across different iterations, increased fines for illegal dumping and/or made it a crime to transport waste matter for the purposes of illegal dumping. *This bill was held in Assembly Public Safety Committee.*

AB 2374 (Bauer-Kahan, Chapter 784, Statutes of 2022) – Increased the maximum fine for the dumping of commercial quantities of waste by a business that employs more than 10 employees; required the court to order a person convicted of dumping commercial quantities of waste to pay for the removal of the waste matter that was illegally dumped; and required the court to notify the relevant licensing or permitting entity, if the violator holds a business license or permit, and required the entity to make that information publicly available.

AB 215 (Mathis, 2019) – Would have made a fourth violation of illegal dumping on private property a misdemeanor punishable by up to 30 days in the county jail and created a fine of not less than \$750 nor more than \$3,000. *This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.*

SB 409 (Wilk, 2019) – Would have increased the fines for the dumping of waste in non-commercial quantities and made it a crime to transport waste matter for the purposes of illegal dumping. *This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.*

AB 1216 (Bauer-Kahan, 2019) – Would have created a pilot program to employ a single law enforcement officer in both Alameda and Contra Costa counties to enforce laws prohibiting dumping. *This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.*

AB 1992 (Canciamilla, Chapter 416, Statutes of 2006) – Imposed the graduated penalties and increased fines for second and third violations of illegal dumping offenses.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

POSITIONS: (Communicated to the committee before noon on Wednesday, April 8, 2026.)

SUPPORT:

City of Oakland (Sponsor)
Antioch Police Department
Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA)
Block By Block Organizing Network (BBBON)
Californians Against Waste
City of Union City
Easy Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC)
League of California Cities
Stopwaste
Waste Management (WM)

OPPOSITION:

None received

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