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**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

**Senator Blakespear, Chair**

**2025 - 2026 Regular**

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**Bill No:** SB 1230  
**Author:** Valladares  
**Version:** 2/19/2026  
**Urgency:** No  
**Consultant:** Brynn Cook

**Hearing Date:** 4/22/2026  
**Fiscal:** Yes

**SUBJECT:** Solid waste: illegal dumping: penalties: resources

**DIGEST:** This bill increases the penalties associated with illegal dumping and requires the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery to provide specified information on their internet website.

**ANALYSIS:**

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989, administered by the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle), generally regulates solid waste disposal, management, and recycling. (Public Resources Code (PRC) § 40050 et seq.)
- 2) Authorizes a local governmental agency to determine aspects of solid waste handling that are of local concern, including, but not limited to, fees to charge and the extent of providing solid waste handling services. (PRC § 40058-4006)
- 3) Makes it illegal to dump waste on a public or private highway or road, including any portion of the right-of-way thereof, or on private property without consent, or in a public park or other public property (Pen. Code, § 374.3, subd. (a))
- 4) Establishes penalties for illegal dumping of commercial and non-commercial quantities of waste, including:
  - a) A person convicted of dumping non-commercial quantities of waste may be required to pay the cost of cleanup or cleanup themselves for 12 hours, in addition to a mandatory fine of the following amounts:
    - i) First offense: \$250-\$1,000;
    - ii) Second offense: \$500-\$1,500; and
    - iii) Third offense: \$750-\$3,000.
    - iv) Doubles the fines above if the court finds that the waste matter placed, deposited, or dumped was used tires (Pen. Code, § 374.3)

- b) A person convicted of illegally dumping commercial quantities is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for not more than six months and by a fine. Provides that the fine is mandatory at the following amounts:
  - i) First offense: \$1,000-\$3,000;
  - ii) Second offense: \$3,000-\$6,000; and
  - iii) Third offense: \$6,000-\$10,000. (Pen. Code, § 374.3, subd. (h)(1).)
  
- c) Provides that if a person convicted for a violation of illegal dumping in commercial quantities is the owner or operator of the business involved in the illegal dumping, and that business employs more than 10 full-time employees, the mandatory fine is as follows:
  - i) First offense: \$1,000-\$5,000;
  - ii) Second offense: \$3,000-\$10,000; and
  - iii) Third offense: \$6,000-\$20,000. (Pen. Code, § 374.3, subd. (h)(2).)
  
- 5) States that the court shall require, in addition to the fine imposed upon a conviction, that a person convicted for illegal dumping in commercial quantities remove, or pay the cost of removing, any waste matter which the convicted person dumped or caused to be dumped upon the public or private property. (Pen. Code, § 374.3, subd. (h)(3).)
  
- 6) Requires the court, if a person convicted for illegal dumping in commercial quantities holds a license or permit to conduct business that is substantially related to the illegal dumping for which the person was convicted, to notify the applicable licensing or permitting entity subject to the jurisdiction of the Department of Consumer Affairs of the conviction, as specified. (Pen. Code, § 374.3, subd. (h)(4)(A).)
  
- 7) Requires the licensing or permitting entity to record and post the offense on the public profile of the license or permit holder on the internet website of the entity. (Pen. Code, § 374.3, subd. (h)(4)(B).)
  
- 8) Defines “commercial quantities” as an amount of waste matter generated in the course of a trade, business, profession, or occupation, or an amount equal to or in excess of one cubic yard. Specifies that it does not apply to the dumping of household waste at a person’s own residence. (Pen. Code, § 374.3, subd. (h)(5).)

- 9) Requires the court, when setting fines pursuant to the above violations, to consider the defendant's ability to pay, including consideration of several specified factors. (Pen. Code, § 374.3, subd. (j).

This bill:

- 1) Requires CalRecycle to create an internet website with resources to help cities and counties combat, prevent, and clean up illegal dumping, as specified.  
Further:
  - a) Specifies that the website may include educational outreach materials, best practices, enforcement tools, and grant opportunities available to cities and counties; and
  - b) Allows the department to collaborate with other state agencies for the internet website.
- 2) Increases the fine for the dumping of non-commercial amounts of waste to not less than \$1,500 nor more than \$3,000 for the second conviction, and to not less than \$3,000 nor more than \$5,000 for the third and any subsequent convictions.
- 3) Increases the fine for the dumping of commercial quantities of waste to not less than \$6,000 nor more than \$10,000 for the second conviction and to not less than \$10,000 nor more than \$15,000 for the third and any subsequent convictions.
- 4) Increases the fine for the dumping of commercial quantities of waste by a business that employs more than 10 employees to not less than \$6,000 nor more than \$10,000 for the second conviction and to not less than \$15,000 nor more than \$25,000 for the third and any subsequent convictions.

## Background

- 1) *What is Illegal Dumping?* Illegal dumping is the act of disposing of solid waste at a location that is not a permitted solid waste disposal facility. Illegal dumping has significant negative environmental, social, and economic impacts statewide.

Environmentally, illegal dumping can lead to soil and water contamination as plastic, heavy metals, and other waste materials leach into the ground. In landfills, this waste would be properly contained to stop it from leaking into soil and water. Moreover, landfills are subject to continuous environmental monitoring to ensure they are not polluting the adjacent environment.

In addition to environmental costs, illegal dumping has financial costs. Local governments spend tens of millions of dollars annually to remove illegally dumped materials. The cost of cleaning illegally dumped material can also fall on the shoulders of private property owners who own the land where the waste is dumped, or who want to beautify and protect their community.

Illegal dumping happens in both rural and urban areas. For example, in Oakland, the amount of illegally dumped trash collected by the city has increased sixfold since 2015.<sup>1</sup> Los Angeles County's illegal dumping cleanup costs grew from \$2.3 million in FY 2019-2020 to \$6.8 million in FY 2023-2024, a nearly threefold increase.<sup>2</sup> Los Angeles County also projected a 15 percent increase in reported illegal dumping cases from 2023 to 2024, to over 15,800 cases.<sup>3</sup>

Rural areas may be even more severely impacted by illegal dumping. There are reports of pervasive dumping in the desert of the Antelope Valley.<sup>4</sup> Residents there say there are more than 100 dump sites scattered throughout the valley—from Lake Los Angeles to the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve and north to the Mojave.<sup>5</sup> One site is alleged to contain more than 182,000 tons of debris left over from the processing of construction and demolition material.<sup>6</sup>

Illegal dump sites undermine the quality of life of nearby residents and are environmental and public health hazards. From 2020 to 2024, self-combustible wood chips and organic materials used to camouflage garbage as mulch have sparked 42 fires, costing taxpayers more than \$1.6 million to extinguish and exposing downwind Antelope Valley residents to toxic smoke, contaminated

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<sup>1</sup> Soumya Karlamangla, *How a City Awash in Garbage is Trying to Take Out the Trash*, New York Times (Oct. 8, 2025) <<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/08/us/oakland-california-trash-garbage.html>>.

<sup>2</sup> Renee Eng & Cory Minderhout, *Major trash haulers accused of illegal dumping at a dozen Southern California sites: Investigation*, Spectrum News 1 (Apr. 3, 2025) <<https://spectrumnews1.com/ca/southern-california/public-safety/2025/03/19/illegal-dumping-concerns>> [hereafter Spectrum News Article].

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Jacob Margolis, *Diapers, concrete and acres of construction debris—how illegal dumping in the desert got so bad*, LAist (May 19, 2025) <<https://laist.com/news/climate-environment/waste-dumping-antelope-valley-high-desert>> [hereafter LAist Article]; Susanne Rust, *Antelope Valley residents say they are fed up with rampant dumping, official inaction*, Los Angeles Times (May 11, 2025) <<https://www.latimes.com/science/story/2025-05-11/illegal-dumping-in-antelope-valley>> [hereafter LA Times Article].

<sup>5</sup> LA Times Article, *supra*.

<sup>6</sup> LAist Article, *supra*.

dust, and airborne particulates.<sup>7</sup> The Bravo fire—ignited in 2024 at an 80-acre illegal dump site—cost the LA County Fire Department more than \$288,000, took four days to extinguish, and wafted toxic smoke over residences.<sup>8</sup>

- 2) *Why does illegal dumping happen?* Materials are often illegally dumped because individuals do not want to pay tip fees at landfills. This is especially true for materials that are challenging to dump or have high fees associated with them, such as bulky mattresses or electronic waste. While the cost of tip fees varies enormously across the State, Waste Management Sacramento Recycling and Transfer charges the following per item:
- Bulky Items Furniture - (Each Piece) \$22.98
  - Each Mattress or Box Spring (Each Piece) - \$25.54
  - Each Appliance without Freon - \$31.50
  - Each Appliance with Freon - \$39.94

Some sources allege that waste haulers choose to pay as little as \$4 per ton to dump at an illegal site instead of \$60 to \$120 per ton at a licensed facility.<sup>9</sup> With such incentives, local enforcement action may sometimes be insufficient to deter illegal dumping by repeat bad actors, such as some waste hauler companies.<sup>10</sup>

- 3) *Government Responsibility for Illegal Dumping?* Local and State policing agencies cite individuals that are caught illegally dumping, but those agencies are not usually responsible for cleanup programs. Instead, different branches of local governments may be responsible for abating and cleaning up illegal dump sites.

Local governments' capacities and strategies to address illegal dumping are highly varied across the State. For example, Los Angeles County has created a web portal for residents to report illegal dumping<sup>11</sup> and prioritizes cleanups of dump sites based in part on the number of residents who report a given site. However, many more counties or cities have no system in place for residents to report illegal dump sites. In some local jurisdictions, local code enforcement is the primary mechanism for abating litter and enforcing cleanups: in others, public work departments have the primary role in organizing cleanups.

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<sup>7</sup> Scott Schwebke, Antelope Valley residents waging battle against massive illegal dumping campaign, Los Angeles Daily News (Aug. 17, 2025) <<https://www.dailynews.com/2025/08/17/antelope-valley-residents-waging-battle-against-massive-illegal-dumping/>> [hereafter Los Angeles Daily News Article].

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> LAist Article, *supra*.

<sup>11</sup> <https://cleanla.lacounty.gov/illegal-dumping/>

However they approach abatement and cleanup activities, local entities are supported in their efforts by CalRecycle, which provides direction, training, and certification of Local Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) that carry out many CalRecycle directives. CalRecycle also administers some limited funding for litter and illegal dumping cleanup projects. These funding opportunities include the Farm and Ranch Grant Program and grants for California Conservation Corps.

## Comments

- 1) *Purpose of Bill.* According to the author, “Illegal dumping is a persistent and costly problem affecting communities throughout California, particularly in rural, desert, and lower-income areas where enforcement resources are most limited. In Senate District 23, residents of Victorville and surrounding high-desert communities have documented hundreds of unauthorized dump sites containing construction debris, household waste, plastics, and other discarded materials. These sites degrade natural habitats, create fire risks, and impose significant financial burdens on local governments that are often already stretched thin.

“SB 1230 takes two targeted, practical steps to address this ongoing problem. First, it increases fines for repeat illegal dumping offenders under California Penal Code Section 374.3. Second, SB 1230 designates the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) as the lead state agency for supporting cities and counties in combating illegal dumping. It requires CalRecycle to create a publicly accessible website offering enforcement tools, best practices, educational outreach materials, and information on available grant funding. Cities and counties, particularly smaller and rural jurisdictions, currently lack a centralized state resource for this guidance. This bill provides that infrastructure without creating a new state mandate on local governments.”

- 2) *More fines and more resources.* SB 1230 takes a two-prong approach to try and prevent and mitigate illegal dumping in California. Firstly, it increases penalties for illegally dumping material (increasing fines for repeat offenders and commercial dumpers). Secondly, it tasks CalRecycle with leading coordination and developing a website where local agencies and individuals can find all the answers they might need to deal with an illegal dumping incident they are concerned with. This includes collating outreach and education tools, information on enforcement options, and grants that could be relevant for litter abatement and cleanup. Given the prevalence and increase of illegal dumping, and the cost to human health and the environment, requiring

additional supports from CalRecycle as outlined in SB 1230 is a step towards solving a significant problem.

**DOUBLE REFERRAL:**

This measure was heard in Senate Public Safety Committee on April 7, 2026, and passed out of committee with a vote of 6-0.

**Related/Prior Legislation**

AB 2374 (Bauer-Kahan, Chapter 784, Statutes of 2022) increases fines for individuals and businesses who are illegally dumping commercial quantities of waste. Signed into law: Chapter 784, Statutes of 2022.

**SOURCE:** Author

**SUPPORT:**

California Chapters of the Solid Waste Association of North America's Legislative Task Force  
Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC)

**OPPOSITION:**

All of US or None (HQ)  
California Public Defenders Association  
Indivisible CA Statestrong  
ACLU California Action  
Debt Free Justice California  
Legal Services for Prisoners With Children

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