CONTAINER RECYCLING INSTITUTE

4361 Keystone Ave. • Culver City, CA 90232
Telephone (310) 559-7451 • Fax (888) 839-3857
www.container-recycling.org
www.bottlebill.org

March 28, 2019

Assembly Member Cecilia M. Aguiar-Curry
Natural Resources Committee Chair Laura Friedman and Vice Chair Heath Flora
By email: assemblymember.friedman@assembly.ca.gov, assemblymember.flora@assembly.ca.gov, assemblymember.aguiar-curry@assembly.ca.gov

Dear Assembly Member Aguiar-Curry, Chair Friedman, Vice Chair Flora, and Committee,

We are writing in support of dual-stream recycling, in relation to AB 815, "Integrated waste management plans: source reduction and recycling element: dual stream recycling programs."

The proposed legislation would incentivize cities, counties, and regional agencies to implement dual-stream curbside collection instead of single-stream by finding that any jurisdiction that has adopted dual-stream has made a "good faith effort" to implement source reduction and recycling, and is therefore not subject to administrative civil penalties for non-compliance with local diversion mandates contained in Section 41780 of the Public Resources Code.

CRI's research corroborates what the bill author and legislative counsel have stated: that by mixing paper and many types of containers in one collection bin, single-stream recycling leads to high rates of contamination and landfilling of unmarketable material and residue, and that dual-stream recycling produces cleaner, more marketable material.

The Legislative Counsel's Digest on this bill says that waste haulers report contamination rates of 25-50% of collected volumes, much of which is "stockpiled and eventually landfilled."

Market prices themselves underscore the undesirability of low-quality material. CRI analyzed historical commodity price data available through the website RecyclingMarkets.net, and found that in 2017, PET plastic bottles collected through California curbside programs ("Curbside grade B in CA") had an average scrap value of **$256**

Table 1. California PET and glass scrap prices, 2017

	Curbside ($/ton)	Deposit ($/ton)
PET plastic bottles (a)	$ 256	$ 404
	Unsorted ($/ton)	**Sorted ($/ton)**
Glass bottles (b)	($38)	$ 23

Prices are regional averages for 2017, Los Angeles (Southwest U.S.) from RecyclingMarkets.net.

(a) "PET Curbside Grade B in CA" is from curbside programs (which in California are primarily single-stream) and dropoff programs. Deposit PET is from retail and redemption centers accepting CRV containers.

(b) Sorted glass is an average of three values for separated, single-color glass (flint, amber, and green). Unsorted glass is "3-mix" (the 3 colors combined).

© Container Recycling Institute, 2019

per ton, whereas the same PET bottles collected through deposit programs had an average scrap value of **$404 per ton,** as Table 1 shows. In other words, there was a 58% premium paid for PET plastic bottles **not** collected through CA curbside programs which are dominated by single-stream collection. In 2016, the scrap prices were $213 and $383 respectively: ***an 80% difference.***

The price differentials for glass were even more striking: unsorted, 3-color mixed glass had a ***negative value of -$38 per ton*** (recycling program operators have to pay to get rid of it), whereas single-color, sorted glass had positive values of **$30** per ton for flint (clear) glass, **$28** per ton for amber (brown), and **$13** per ton for green. In Table 1 above, the average of these three single-color values is shown: **$23 per ton**. Clearly, it pays to sort.

Simply put, dual-stream recycling makes it much less likely that paper will contaminate loads of glass, metal, and plastic, and that broken container material will contaminate fiber bales. It keeps rigid containers separate from paper at the source, and reduces processing time, costs, and wear on equipment at materials recovery facilities (MRFs).

In the photos below, deposit glass is on the left, and on the right is a load of highly contaminated glass from a MRF accepting material from single-stream curbside programs.

Deposit glass from a California redemption center

Highly contaminated glass from a single-stream MRF

Dual-stream glass is nearly as clean as deposit glass.

CRI favors of the adoption of dual-stream recycling by communities across California.

For more detailed information, please see our publications: “Cullet Comparisons,” by Susan Collins, *Resource Recycling*, Feb. 2017, “A Common Theme: Single Stream Recycling.” by Susan Collins, *Resource Recycling*, Feb. 2012, and “Understanding economic and environmental impacts of single-stream collection systems,” CRI, December 2009, which are available on our website: http://www.container-recycling.org/index.php/publications.

Please contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Susan Collins
President, Container Recycling Institute

About the Container Recycling Institute: *CRI is a nonprofit organization and a leading authority on the economic and environmental impacts of beverage containers and other consumer-product packaging.*