

# BE LEAN AND GREEN

GET THE SEAL TO PROVE IT.

Introducing the **Sleep Products Sustainability Program (SP2)** for California manufacturers.

Launched by the Mattress Recycling Council (MRC), SP2 is designed to help reduce waste and energy consumption during the manufacturing process. The best part? You'll save money while doing your part to help the Earth. To take advantage of the benefits of this no-cost, voluntary program, please visit: [www.MattressRecyclingCouncil.org/SP2](http://www.MattressRecyclingCouncil.org/SP2)



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SP2 VISIT  
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## Mattress Recycling Council Introduces the Sleep Products Sustainability Program



# Lean and Efficient

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## There's something about this time of year that makes

decluttering so appealing. The lazy days of summer, when we were outside as much as possible, have slipped by. Now, with autumn here and winter on the horizon, the indoor days are coming. Clutter can create claustrophobia, so, for me, the time to tackle it is now.

For the past month, I've taken on one decluttering project at a time. My office, several kitchen cabinets, bathroom cabinets, medicine cabinets and the junk drawer all have received the treatment. A new order has been created. Taking away the old has allowed me to see what I actually have and reorganize it in a way that makes life easier.

Recent books and Netflix shows have fanned these decluttering flames. One of the motivations behind decluttering is to possess only what truly matters. I find it also brings a greater efficiency. I can lay my hands on what I need right away because I know where it is. And it saves money. Previously, I might have purchased something, such as batteries, because I didn't know whether I already had them.

In the same way, the Mattress Recycling Council's new Sleep Products Sustainability Program, or SP2, is designed to help manufacturers reduce waste and energy consumption to make their operations more efficient and, ultimately, save them money. (See article on page 13.) While not quite the same as decluttering, SP2 brings about similar end results and employs some of the same thinking. Both require individuals and companies to look at their spaces and processes with new eyes.

Reading about this program inspired me. While SP2 is starting in California with mattress manufacturers, it has the potential to expand to suppliers and retailers and maybe other states. It's such a good idea. Trainers give manufacturers the tools to evaluate their facilities, looking for areas where they can reduce waste. It might mean asking what else they can recycle. It might mean seeing where energy or water is being wasted. Or the company can look at reducing transportation and fuel costs.

I highly recommend that you read the article. One example in the article prompted me to look at water waste in my home. We have a leak that, now that I look more closely at it, should be an easy fix. If it works, I'm definitely looking forward to a lower water bill.

This article is just the first that will highlight this new program. Look for updates in the months ahead as more manufacturers figure out ways to make themselves leaner and more efficient.

In the meantime, take a look at your facility and even your home and see what changes you can make. It will make a difference to your bottom line and to the environment. Win-win.

*Beth English*

Beth English • Managing Editor



## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

# Reduce Waste, Save Money

The Mattress Recycling Council is helping California mattress manufacturers improve plant efficiency through an initiative called the Sleep Products Sustainability Program

by Julie A. Palm

## The Mattress Recycling

Council has launched the Sleep Products Sustainability Program, a new initiative to help mattress manufacturers reduce waste and energy consumption — making their operations more efficient and saving them money. Exemplifying the efficiency principles it promotes, the program is called SP2 for short.

SP2 training and certification is offered at no cost to mattress manufacturers with facilities in California that want to improve operations at their production plants, distribution centers, warehouses and/or offices. Although initially available only to California mattress producers, MRC may expand the program to suppliers and retailers in that state and eventually to companies in other states. Pleasant Mattress, based in Fresno, California, was the first manufacturer to undergo the training, and MRC expects two or three other companies to complete the training by the end of the year.

The voluntary program was developed as part of the bedding industry's commitment to environmental stewardship, says Justine Fallon, MRC director of operations.

"SP2 encourages manufacturers to look at their products and their processes and to

determine what things they can do within their facility to reduce their environmental impact and create efficiencies that lead to cost savings," Fallon says. "It helps them create a structure that will lead to continual improvement."

The program is facility based, meaning that if a manufacturer has, for example, three production plants and one distribution center in California, each of the four locations could participate. SP2 is largely self-directed, with companies setting their own goals and choosing their own SP2 program manager and team to evaluate current operations at a facility and recommend improvements.

"You want to assemble a team that really knows your facility inside and out," Fallon says. "That could mean your operations manager and facilities manager but also the person who pays your invoices every month and who knows what your electric bills run."

MRC provides educational materials and leads the initial daylong training at each participating facility. SP2 trainers also are available to answer questions as manufacturers do internal evaluations and make improvements, a process that typically takes several months.

"It's up to the manufacturer and the team to decide



Pleasant Mattress, which has two adjacent facilities in Fresno, California, was the first mattress manufacturer to take the initial training for the new Sleep Products Sustainability Program.

what they want to focus on and accomplish," Fallon says. "Rather than telling them what they have to do, our goal is to encourage them to brainstorm and make connections between what they can do to reduce their environmental impact and what they can do to save money."

After the successful completion of a final audit, the facility earns SP2 certification.

## Success stories

SP2 is modeled on Enhancing Furniture's Environmental Culture, a program from the American Home Furnishings Alliance in High Point, North Carolina, that certifies furniture facilities.

Bill Perdue, AHFA vice president of regulatory affairs, helped create EFEC more than 20 years ago and is conducting initial trainings





Pleasant Mattress, a participant in SP2, says the initiative fits with a company goal of constant improvement.



SP2 encourages participants like Pleasant Mattress to look at every facet of their operations for waste and potential cost savings.

for MRC's SP2 program. As an SP2 trainer, Perdue's role is to educate a facility's team on program basics, share case studies from companies that have successfully made changes and begin a brainstorming process that each facility's SP2 team will continue after the training session ends.

"It's important to engage the team and energize them," Perdue says. "Really, training is just good storytelling. You want to help them build their own narrative."

And Perdue has compelling stories to share, starting with a major furniture brand that was convinced its plants already were operating as efficiently as they could, but agreed to participate in EFEC with Perdue's prompting.

"I said, 'Pick a facility and put it through the program. If it doesn't save you money, walk away from it,'" Perdue says. "They picked a facility, they picked a team and we did the training. Based on the success at that one facility, they rolled EFEC out to all their facilities and saved millions of dollars once it was in full force. They took a good company and made it better."

The SP2 program recom-

mends participating facilities complete a facility impact analysis. "Basically, you start at the front door and walk through to the back door, looking at every single place in that facility where waste can occur," Perdue says. As part of the evaluation, a facility's SP2 team should ask: What else can be recycled? What can be repurposed? How can products be re-engineered to reduce material usage and waste from the start? Where is electricity being wasted? Where is water being wasted? How can the facility reduce transportation and fuel costs?

"What if you're a smaller manufacturer and, through this process, you find out you're essentially throwing away \$350,000 a year?" Perdue says. "If you can capture that money, that \$350,000 goes straight to your bottom line."

Perdue tells the story of a furniture manufacturer that, among other things, set a goal of significantly reducing its water usage, in part to help conserve a local lake that provides not only water to the city but also recreational opportunities for the com-

munity. The plant made a number of changes — from installing water-conserving toilets to repairing leaky water fountains — and significantly reduced its consumption yet didn't meet the goal the EFEC team had set.

"They were dumbfounded," he says. "To their credit, they put out a request on their intranet, asking the entire facility if anyone had any ideas." Turns out a woman who worked part time in the cafeteria did. She pointed the team to an industrial ice maker. Awhile back, it had stopped making "that good crunchy ice and was making soft ice that people complained about," Perdue says. A faulty cooling coil was to blame, and to make a quick fix without ordering an expensive part, a maintenance team had decided to keep the coil's temperature down by running water over it 24/7.

With the water waster identified, Perdue says, the facility ordered a new coil "that cost a couple hundred bucks, turned off the hose and met their water-saving goal." The employees got better ice as a bonus.

"This is not a 'hug the

tree' program," Perdue says. "Yes, it's designed to reduce a facility's environmental footprint, but it's a business program designed to find waste. Waste equals money. If you can find waste — and every facility can find waste — you can save a lot of money. That's why it's transformative."

**Pleasant Mattress goes 1<sup>st</sup>** Pleasant Mattress took the SP2 training over the summer, and Rion Morgenstern, Pleasant Mattress president and chief executive officer, says the program fits perfectly with his company's mission statement, which begins: "Pleasant Mattress designs and manufactures sleep products to provide a safe, comfortable place to sleep. Our mission is summed up in a single word, 'better.'" SP2 also fits with the third-generation family business' values, which include respect, understanding, service, teamwork and constant improvement.

"We are always looking for ways to improve our factory," Morgenstern says. "At the core of what we do is striving to constantly get better."

The company has two Fresno facilities: a 100,000-square-foot primary mattress manufacturing plant, which includes corporate offices, and a nearby 50,000-square-foot plant that produces mattress components and the McRoskey brand. The 11-person SP2 team Pleasant Mattress has assembled is looking at operations across facilities and is led by plant manager Domingo Urrea.

The team is just now beginning to evaluate Pleasant Mattress' operations and recommending changes.

"Our approach is going to be to focus on simple changes that will have cumulative impact," Morgenstern says. "I describe it as we're going to look for singles or doubles, not triples or home runs."

The goal, he says, is to make meaningful and sustainable changes that will build momentum to make

more changes in the future.

"We have a mantra here: crawl, walk, run," Morgenstern explains. "You have to develop skills and discipline before you can be the best at something. If we get people to buy into something simple, like 'I need to turn my monitor off at the end of each day,' that becomes part of the culture and we move on from there. I see SP2 as part of our effort of constant improvement." •

TO LEARN MORE  
AND ENROLL

For more information or to enroll in the Sleep Products Sustainability Program, mattress manufacturers in California can visit [MattressRecyclingCouncil.org/SP2](https://mattressrecyclingcouncil.org/SP2) or contact Michael LaRussa, MRC program coordinator, at 916-591-2540 or [mlarussa@mattress-recyclingcouncil.org](mailto:mlarussa@mattress-recyclingcouncil.org).

## Beyond the Low-Hanging Fruit

**Buoyed by the initial waste reductions and cost savings they**

discover through an initiative like the Sleep Products Sustainability Program, manufacturers often are inspired to make even larger changes to their facilities and operations.

"Companies get to the low-hanging fruit pretty quickly, but if you want to keep pushing the program forward, you need to be more creative. This is the point where you see companies investing in bigger capital projects or re-engineering products," says Bill Perdue, vice president of regulatory affairs for the American Home Furnishings Alliance in High Point, North Carolina. He helped create Enhancing Furniture's Environmental Culture, an AHFA program that is the model for the Mattress Recycling Council's new SP2.

For instance, Perdue says, through the EFEC program, he once worked with a company that wanted to stop landfilling scrap fabric. "In this case, the fabric was basically polypropylene to begin with and they found a small plant that takes that scrap fabric, puts it under heat and pressure to melt it down, and then makes small parts later used to assemble finished product," Perdue says.

As that example illustrates, companies that want to find deeper waste reductions or cost savings in their operations can tap the expertise of partner companies or their existing suppliers.

Hank Little, president of Atlanta Attachment Co. in Lawrenceville, Georgia, says improved equipment technology can help mattress manufacturers achieve many of the efficiency and savings goals that SP2 targets. His customers who are looking to add a new machine to their production line or replace an older piece of equipment typically insist that the new machinery be as efficient as it can.

"We would estimate 90% to 95% of their goal is on cost savings of material and energy, while 5% to 10% is on reducing maintenance,

operational labor and complexity of the operation," Little says.

Given that, AAC engineers design machinery with reduction of labor costs and material waste, in addition to other factors, in mind. A case in point is AAC's 1390B Automatic Mattress Packaging machine. The machine allows operators to splice a new roll of film onto an existing roll, eliminating film waste. When the machine is set up with tear-resistant and puncture-resistant AAC MW Film, there is further savings of plastic consumption and waste. Other features of the machine, including a serial bus control system for drives and motors and automatic monitoring and control of seal bar temperatures, help to save energy.

"The primary concern for our customers is usually to save money and/or improve productivity," says Paul Block, president of sales for Global Systems Group, the machinery division of Carthage, Missouri-based Leggett & Platt Inc. "Fortunately, one important way to save money in manufacturing is the elimination of waste. If we can show them how the newer equipment's better efficiencies can also result in sustainability benefits, that's a bonus for them."

For instance, the company's new XT9 Stitch Bridge stitches foam mattress comfort layers together instead of gluing them. "Replacing gallons of glue with a very small amount of thread is a much better alternative for the manufacturer," Block says. "The XT9 can reduce materials costs in this process by over 95%. ... It's a great cost savings for the manufacturer and a more environmentally friendly process, as well."

Block says GSG's mattress manufacturing customers typically have three "waste reduction priorities" — reducing material waste, reducing labor waste by increasing productivity and reducing energy waste. New GSG equipment typically helps companies meet all three goals, he says.



# Learn More



To stay up to date on the progress of bedding manufacturers participating in the Sleep Products Sustainability Program, check upcoming issues of BedTimes, the BedTimes website (BedTimesMagazine.com) and BedTimes' twice-monthly newsletter (BedTimes in Brief).

## BedTimes

# BEING GREEN IS GOOD BUSINESS



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**SLEEP PRODUCTS  
SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM**



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