

MATTRESS RECYCLING CUTS GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, REDUCES WATER AND ENERGY CONSUMPTION

MRC's 2021 California operations save 818 million gallons of water annually

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – A life cycle analysis of the Mattress Recycling Council's California operations conducted by an independent party found the program provides significant environmental benefits, including substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions along with water and energy usage.

The energy, water and greenhouse gas emissions savings are achieved when recycled mattress materials are used to make new products rather than manufacturers using of new, or "virgin," materials.

MRC has operated a statewide mattress recycling program in California since 2016 and operates similar programs in Connecticut and Rhode Island. Collectively, these programs have recycled more than 11.5 million mattresses. MRC commissioned the study to establish baseline environmental performance indicators for its California program. Using this data, MRC can now focus on reducing carbon consumption, such as by making mattress transportation more efficient.

The life cycle analysis (www.mattressrecyclingcouncil.org/lca-report) found not only that the materials recovered and reused as a result of MRC's recycling activities result in carbon savings that far exceed the amount of carbon used to collect, transport and dismantle mattresses, but that it provides other positive environmental benefits.

"The study demonstrates that mattress recycling generates impressive benefits across a broad spectrum of environmental indicators," said Mike O'Donnell, MRC's chief operating officer. "It also highlights areas where MRC can improve its environmental performance. Most of our energy consumption and carbon emissions are associated with the collection and transport over 15,000 loads of discarded mattresses annually. We can make our operations more sustainable by finding efficiencies in our transportation network."

In 2021, MRC processed 1.6 million mattresses in California and recovered or reused 77 percent of the material, which amounted to MRC reclaiming over 69.2 million pounds of material. Steel and foam constitute the bulk of the recycled materials. Steel mattress springs are sold as scrap metal used to make new appliances, building materials and other steel products, and mattress foam is mostly recycled into carpet padding.

"Completing the life cycle analysis represents an important milestone for MRC," said Ryan Trainer, MRC president. "In addition to documenting that mattress recycling works for the environment, the study provides a valuable tool for MRC and others moving forward. This analysis will help guide investment and research decisions, inform policy discussions and allow MRC to evaluate future scenarios more accurately."

The study found that by recycling mattress components, MRC generated the following annual environmental benefits:

- 75 million fewer pounds of greenhouse gases emitted, which is equivalent to the emissions from driving a gas-fueled vehicle nearly 100 million miles.
- 818 million gallons of water saved, equivalent to the annual consumption of 37,500 residents.

- 174,000 kilowatt hours of power saved, equivalent to the amount of power a city of 40,000 residents would use in one year.

Stated differently, the materials reclaimed from every mattress recycled saves 500 gallons of water, enough energy to power the average household for three days and reduces greenhouse gas emissions by an amount equivalent to driving 60 fewer miles.

A recording of the Feb. 7 webinar that discussed the report is now available on the MRC website or on YouTube: https://youtu.be/Qk442se4_ZI

The web posting (www.mattressrecyclingcouncil.org/lca-report) includes a 5-page executive summary and the full 104-page report. An independent panel is currently completing an International Organization for Standardization (ISO) audit of the report.

About the Mattress Recycling Council

The Mattress Recycling Council (MRC) is a nonprofit organization that operates recycling programs in states that have passed mattress recycling laws: California, Connecticut and Rhode Island. MRC was founded by the bedding industry and recycles nearly 2 million mattresses each year. For more information about MRC, go to MattressRecyclingCouncil.org. To inform residents and businesses about the availability and importance of mattress recycling, MRC created a public education campaign branded Bye Bye Mattress. To learn how to recycle your mattress or to find a collection location or event near you, visit ByeByeMattress.com.
