

CALPIRG



CALPIRG State Director Jenn Engstrom calls for the Right to Repair in California. Photo credit: Andy Smith

RIGHT TO REPAIR

California and Apple choose the Right To Repair

Last fall, California adopted the nation's latest statewide Right To Repair law. Thanks to the Right To Repair Act, championed by CALPIRG, Californians will have access to the parts, tools and repair information they need to fix their phones, printers, appliances and other electronic devices when they break.

Shortly thereafter, Apple, maker of the world's most popular smartphone, announced at a White House event that it would comply with California's new law nationwide.

"When you buy something, you should be able to do what you want with it. But when it comes to repair, for too long, electronics manufacturers have made it difficult to live by that core principle," said Jenn Engstrom, state director of CALPIRG.

"We commend Apple for correcting course on

Right to Repair. This move by one of the biggest tech companies in the world is a sign that the Right to Repair is an idea whose time has come."

Apple's actions are a particularly strong sign that the tide is turning in favor of Right To Repair.

CALPIRG's multi-year campaign for a Right To Repair law, first garnering a favorable Los Angeles Times editorial and unanimous support from the California Senate, helped bring Apple on board in California. And with the support of the Biden administration, Apple has decided to comply with California's Right To Repair Act nationwide, bringing the benefits of repair access to millions more consumers and helping to keep more of our phones, tablets and other electronics out of landfills.

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CALPIRG and The Public Interest Network are celebrating 50 years of action for a change.

WINTER 2024

CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO REPAIR CONT.



CALPIRG staff and volunteers with state Sen. Susan Talamantes Eggman and our partners at Californians Against Waste and the Electronic Frontier Foundation calling for the Right to Repair.

The California state Legislature approved the Right to Repair Act with a 39-0 vote in the Senate and 65-1 vote in the Assembly. Senate Bill 244, by state Sen. Susan Talamantes Eggman, would significantly expand consumers' and independent repair shops' access to repair materials needed to fix electronics and appliances.

Advocates have been calling for Right to Repair legislation in California for five years. Similar bills have died in the state's Senate Appropriations Committee the past two years after intense industry lobbying efforts against their passage. But public support for Right to Repair in the state has grown alongside a swell of national momentum. New York, Colorado and Minnesota all passed their own Right to Repair laws in the past year.

"This is a victory for every Californian. We can thank the scrappy group of tinkerers, consumers, environmentalists and small business owners who came together to take on the tech industry and win back the right to fix our own stuff," said Jenn.

The Right to Repair Act will bring more competition and consumer choice to the repair marketplace, saving Californian households roughly \$5 billion per year. Keeping electronics in use longer is also expected to reduce the amount of electronic waste sent to California landfills and reduce the need for additional mining and production to replace, rather than repair, devices. Californians currently throw away 46,000 cell phones a day and 772,000 tons of electronic waste—which often contains toxic heavy metals—per year.

In late August, Apple announced its support of the legislation. For years, Apple has been one

of the most visible opponents of repair access while lobbying against giving consumers and independent repair shops what they need to fix devices. However, with the Right to Repair movement gaining recognition and support—and leading to laws in other states—Apple has reversed course and commended SB 244 for striking the right balance between "consumer choice and reliable repairs." HP also came on board in September.

"Right to Repair is the radical yet sensible idea that we should make stuff that lasts and be able to fix our stuff when it breaks," said Jenn. "We're proud that with the visionary leadership of Sen. Talamantes Eggman, California can set an example for other states to follow."

NEWS BRIEFS

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

PIRG urged Mastercard to stop selling user data

Almost every company we interact with collects some amount of data on us. Often, it's more information than they really need—and it's often used for secondary purposes that have nothing to do with delivering the service we're expecting to get.

Mastercard collects data about its cardholders—like how much they spend, where and on what day. It makes sense that Mastercard uses this information to complete transactions.

What doesn't make sense is that Mastercard then uses that data for purposes that have nothing to do with being a credit card—like selling it to data brokers, advertisers and other third parties. It doesn't need to sell our data to be a credit card—but it's profitable for it to do so.

We're urging Mastercard to commit to using the transaction data it collects for what we're expecting—being a safe, secure credit card and nothing else.

When we stand together to protect our data, we can convince Mastercard to change its practices. Sign our petition on our website to let Mastercard know its data sales need to stop. You can also email Mastercard's privacy complaints

OUR MISSION

When consumers are cheated or the voices of ordinary citizens are drowned out by special interest lobbyists, PIRG speaks up and takes action. We uncover threats to public health and well-being and fight to end them, using the time-tested tools of investigative research, media exposes, grassroots organizing, advocacy and litigation. PIRG's mission is to deliver persistent, results oriented public interest activism that protects consumers, encourages a fair, sustainable economy and fosters responsive democratic government.

NEWS BRIEFS

email (privacyanddataprotection@mastercard.com) and send them the clear message: Stop selling my data.

BEYOND PLASTIC

Costco makes new commitments to reduce plastic use

Thanks to your support, CALPIRG and our national network delivered more than 82,000 petitions urging Costco to cut back on wasteful packaging—and the company is listening.

Costco Wholesale has committed to increasing its transparency about its plastic use and developing a 5-year action plan to reduce the amount of plastic it uses. A growing body of data suggests that plastics and microplastics pose significant threats to public health and our environment.

Costco has committed to releasing data on the total plastic footprint—broken down by type of plastic—of its in-house brand, Kirkland Signature, by July 2024. The big box retailer has also committed to disclosing the percentage of recycled content used in its plastic packaging by that same date. Additionally, in December 2024, the company will release a 5-year plastic “action plan” that will outline the steps the company will take to reduce plastic in its Kirkland Signature packaging.

Costco’s commitments come after calls from both shareholders and the general public.

CLEAN AIR

Leaf blowers aren’t just noisy—they’re also huge polluters

You know that annoying sound all too well—the ear-piercing whine of your neighbor’s leaf blower.

But as it turns out, gas-powered leaf blowers and other lawn equipment are more than just a noisy neighborhood nuisance, with some machines emitting as much pollution in an hour as driving hundreds of miles in a car. And that pollution is released right in the middle of our neighborhoods, where people live and breathe, putting our health at risk.

The good news is electric lawn equipment is cleaner, quieter—and, over a lifetime of use,



Seattle FOX 13

often cheaper—than gasoline-powered machines. Moreover, electric options are often just as capable as fossil fuel versions.

R.J. Cross, director of PIRG's Don't Sell My Data campaign, speaks to the media about protecting consumer data.

Our network recently released a new report across the country called “Lawn care goes electric” to help educate the public and call for cities and states around the country to take action to encourage the transition from gasoline-powered lawn equipment to clean electric options.

Visit our website to check out the report and learn more about why transitioning to electric lawn equipment is a good idea.

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Sign up for the latest CALPIRG news, updates and alerts sent directly to your inbox at: calpirg.org.



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Support our work in the public interest by including a gift to CALPIRG or CALPIRG Education Fund in your will, trust or retirement accounts.

For more information call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: plannedgiving@calpirg.org

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CALPIRG

CITIZEN AGENDA • WINTER 2024

50
YEARS

CALPIRG and our national network are celebrating 50 years of action for a change. The Public Interest Network operates and supports organizations committed to a shared vision of a better world and a strategic approach to social change.

BEYOND PLASTIC

Amazon announces the end of plastic-padded shipping bags

In July 2023, Amazon announced that it would be “phasing out padded bags containing plastics in favor of recyclable alternatives.”

The eventual end of the blue and white plastic mailing envelopes is welcome news. Most plastic is landfilled, burned in incinerators, or broken into small pieces in the environment, rather than being recycled. Plastics have been found in nearly every corner of the globe, as well as in human bodies, potentially with harmful impacts.

Amazon is changing its practices after PIRG worked with Environment America and other allies to call on the company to reduce its single-use plastic packaging. Similar actions also have resulted in 1 in every 3 Americans living in a state with a ban of at least one type of single-use plastic. The action



PIRG staff delivered more than 97,000 petition signatures from members and supporters urging Amazon to “break up with plastic” on Valentine’s Day in 2023.

of one company or a few states won’t solve the whole plastic waste problem. But each new commitment to reduce plastic waste paves the way for the next.

Thanks to your action and support, we’ll continue to urge companies to reduce wasteful plastic packaging.

FEATURED STAFF



Jenn Engstrom: Jenn directs CALPIRG’s advocacy efforts and is a leading voice in Sacramento and across the state on protecting public health, standing up for consumers and defending our democracy. Previously, as the deputy national director for the Student PIRGs, she helped run our national effort to mobilize hundreds of thousands of students to vote.

Staff

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