California bill to amend toxics limits in recycled glass packaging

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California’s legislature has passed a bill to temporarily increase permissible heavy metal limits in recycled glass packaging.

If signed into law by the governor, bill SB 232 would increase from 100 to 200 parts per million (ppm) the allowable levels of lead, cadmium, mercury and hexavalent chromium in such products until 1 January 2024. This exemption to the state’s Toxics in Packaging Prevention Act (TPPA) will only apply, though, where the levels of heavy metals exceed 100ppm as a result of the use of recycled materials.

According to a bill analysis prepared in the state’s Senate, the change is necessary because “incidental lead derived from recycled materials used in making glass may disincentivise domestic glass recycling and reduce international import of recycled glass containers.”

It would also bring California in line with EU standards and the US’s Toxics in Packaging Clearinghouse (TPCH) model law.

The measure has been backed by the California Manufacturers & Technology Association, the European Container Glass Foundation, the Glass Packaging Institute, as well as a workers’ union and several beer and wine organisations.

The measure passed both legislative chambers without any dissenting votes.

Further Information:
- SB 232
- TPCH model law