California governor vetoes bill amending toxics limits in recycled glass packaging

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California Governor Gavin Newsom has vetoed a bill to temporarily increase permissible heavy metal limits in recycled glass packaging, despite its unanimous passage in both chambers of the state’s legislature.

In an exception to the state’s Toxics in Packaging Prevention Act (TPPA), the bill (SB 232) would have increased from 100 to 200 parts per million (ppm) the allowable levels of lead, cadmium, mercury and hexavalent chromium in glass packaging until 1 January 2024.

This would only have applied in cases where the levels of heavy metals exceed 100ppm due to the use of recycled materials.

The bill would have brought California’s standards in line with the EU’s, as well as the UK’s Toxics in Packaging Clearinghouse (TPCH) model law.

But while Governor Newsom is a “strong supporter” of increasing recycling efforts, he said in his veto statement that he does not “believe we should risk potential exposure to toxic substances during the process”.

"The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have unequivocally stated there is no safe level of lead exposure, especially for vulnerable populations like our children," he added. "We need to ensure that the food products we give to our children are in glass containers that are safe for consumption."

Put forward by state Senator Bill Dodd (D), the measure did not receive a single dissenting vote in either the state’s Assembly or Senate. And no organisation or individual is listed in opposition in the latest bill analysis.

Mr Dodd could not be reached for comment by the time of publishing.

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

No environmental advocacy organisations registered a position on the bill.

Lisa Martine Jenkins
Americas reporter

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