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CT looking at battery, carpet recycling programs



PHOTO | LISA WILDER

Rocshay Thomas of Park City Green in Bridgeport breaks down an old mattress into its recyclable parts. Centers similar to this one say they recycle 96 percent of mattress materials into usable products: the covers (which can be turned into mattress pads), the cotton stuffing (turned into fabric), the foam (automobile padding), wood pieces (mulch), and springs (reforged steel).

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Batteries, carpet, packaging, pesticides, and fertilizers might soon join paint, mattresses, and consumer electronics as products Connecticut requires manufacturers and customers to cover the cost of recycling.

The Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection awarded a \$180,000 grant to the Boston-based Product Stewardship Institute to develop policies and programs where the manufacturers are responsible for the safe disposal of those five products at the end of their useful life.

Earlier this year, Connecticut became the first state in the nation to implement a mattress program where customers must pay a fee when they purchase the product to cover its recycling cost. Connecticut

has a similar program for paint.

DEEP has made no secret about taking this product stewardship concept to other products, with batteries and carpet likely next on the list.

Connecticut likes product stewardship because it shifts these products out of the waste stream and puts the burden of disposal away from taxpayers and onto manufacturers and consumers.