

FOR MEMBERS SELLING INTO CALIFORNIA

California SB 343: The “Chasing Arrows” Recycling Symbol Law

California's Truth in Recycling law (SB 343) restricts when pellet bags and packaging may display the chasing-arrows symbol, a resin triangle, or any recyclability claim. The rule applies to all packaging sold into California regardless of company size — and the compliance window is closing.

COMPLIANCE DEADLINE

October 4, 2026

After this date, pellet packaging sold in California may not display the chasing-arrows symbol or recyclability claims unless it meets the state's 60/60 recyclability test.

WHAT THE LAW REQUIRES

SB 343 creates a two-part “60/60” test. A package may carry the chasing-arrows symbol, a resin code triangle, the word “recyclable,” or any similar claim only if the material clears both parts below — as determined by CalRecycle's statewide data:

COLLECTION TEST

Material must be collected by curbside/drop-off programs serving ≥ 60% of California's population.

PROCESSING TEST

Collected material must actually be sorted and reprocessed into feedstock for new products.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR PELLET BAG PACKAGING

- Polywoven and multi-layer plastic pellet bags are the highest-risk format. Plastic film reports roughly 28% collection access statewide — well short of the 60% threshold — so these bags generally cannot carry the chasing arrows or “recyclable” language after the deadline.
- Paper and kraft pellet bags are lower risk. Paper/cardboard reports close to 99% collection access, but the packaging must still clear the processing half of the test before any claim is used.
- The restriction covers more than the symbol itself — text like “please recycle” or “100% recyclable,” and any graphic implying recyclability, is treated the same way.

EXISTING INVENTORY: THE MANUFACTURE-DATE RULE

SB 343 is keyed to when a bag is manufactured (filled and sealed), not when it is sold. There is no separate sell-through grace period — the manufacture date itself is the grace period.

- Bags filled and sealed before October 4, 2026 may legally continue to be sold and distributed in California after the deadline with existing labeling, even if that stock sells through months later.
- Bags filled and sealed on or after October 4, 2026 must comply with the 60/60 test at the time of that production run — printing bag film earlier does not grandfather a later fill date.
- Keep batch or production-run records (fill dates, lot numbers) for California-bound inventory so a pre-deadline manufacture date can be documented if a claim is challenged.
- Enforcement status: a federal court granted a preliminary injunction in July 2026 pausing Attorney General enforcement (industry groups argue the law is unconstitutionally vague). The October 4, 2026 date remains on the books and CalRecycle has not withdrawn it — treat this as a pause, not permanent relief, and keep planning toward the deadline.

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

- Audit every bag SKU sold into California for chasing-arrows symbols, resin triangles, or recyclability language, and log its manufacture (fill) date.
- For plastic film and multi-layer bags, plan to remove or replace non-compliant symbols and claims for any production after October 4, 2026.
- Consider compliant alternatives — recycled-content statements, “how2recycle”-style drop-off labeling, or plain material ID without a recyclability claim.
- Talk to your bag supplier now; converter lead times for new plate/cylinder artwork can run several months.

This advisory is provided for member awareness and is not legal advice. Members should consult packaging counsel to confirm SKU-level compliance ahead of the October 4, 2026 deadline.

Questions? Contact PFI Government Affairs at tportz@pelletheat.org • Pellet Fuels Institute • pelletheat.org