


Pushing propane tank recycling

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Single use propane tanks used for camping or cooking leave behind an expensive and hazardous mess for cities to dispose of. A push for more reusable tanks is underway with a free giveaway in Butte County.

OROVILLE, Calif. - An event to giveaway a reusable one-pound propane canister concluded today in Oroville.

The 1 lb. propane canisters that you commonly see when you are camping are only for single-use and are considered hazardous waste.

Virginia McCormick, an associate with the California Product Stewardship Council, says the single-use canisters were not designed by the manufacturer for refilling. It's not safe to be refilled, and if you try to refill it, it is illegal to transport it since it won't meet DOT regulations.

The California Product Stewardship Council says the nonrenewable canisters are built with a single layer of steel, limiting the strength of the canister along with the design not allowing air to properly escape while the refilling process is taking place. To properly clean and dispose of these, it can cost a pretty penny, especially as of late.

"Over the last 10-plus years, we have seen the cost of handling these things just shoot through the roof." For some cities, it could cost as much as 65 dollars to dispose of one single-use canister," Nate Pelczar, a director with the California Product Stewardship Council says



Reusable Propane Tank

Pelczar also says it is a laborious process to dispose of the canisters.

“For a while what they would do is puncture them, try and capture and reuse the gas inside of them; it’s a very laborious process and takes a lot of time and oversight, and is highly regulated because it is hazardous waste,” Pelczar says.

“We found that the towns and counties least able to afford these expensive costs are the rural ones, and what we would like to see is if we can minimize that cost for everyone, especially for those who can’t pay those high costs,” Pelczar says.

The event in Oroville today gave away 240 canisters and ran out before 11:30 a.m. with an opening time of 9 a.m.

“We are hoping to expand the locations for both purchasing and refilling these cylinders in the greater Butte County area as well as across the state,” McCormick says.

Grant funding to give away more canisters like this has run out at least here in Butte County, but work is underway to get more so they could have more handouts for these canisters.

The stewardship council is working to help pass Senate Bill 1280, which would ban single-use propane canisters and transition to reusable canisters by 2028. The bill passed the Senate nearly along party lines and is awaiting a vote in the House.