

PRESS RELEASE

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Governor Schwarzenegger Signs Legislation Combating Metal Theft

In response to the increasing rate of metal theft throughout California, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a package of bills providing law enforcement with new tools to combat metal thieves stealing scrap metals from fire hydrants, utilities, manhole covers, agricultural equipment, guardrails and much more.

"Not only are these crimes destroying property and causing millions of dollars in damages, they are endangering lives." Governor Schwarzenegger said. "We must put a stop to these growing crimes and this package of bills will provide law enforcement with the tools they need to put these thieves behind bars."

The market value of both copper and aluminum significantly increased from 2004 to 2005, driving a sharp increase in incidents of metal theft in California. According to the California Farming Bureau, over \$6 million worth of metal was reported stolen throughout the Central Valley in 2006 alone.

Metal theft has created serious impacts in all parts of the state: Central Valley farmers have lost crops due to irrigation pumps being stripped of wiring, a toxic chemical spill in San Pablo Bay was the result of a \$10 brass valve being stolen from a storage tank and a home burnt to the ground in the City of Hesperia because the fire department was not able to connect to the fire hydrant to put out the fire.

To provide law enforcement with better tools to investigate and prosecute metal theft, the Governor signed the following bills:

- [AB 844](#) by Assembly member, Tom Berryhill, (R-Modesto) puts an end to a pattern of quick cash for metal thieves by requiring recyclers to hold payment for three days, check a photo ID and take a thumbprint of anyone selling scrap metals. It also requires anyone convicted of metal theft to pay restitution for the materials stolen and for any collateral damage caused during the theft.
- [SB 691](#) by Senator, Ron Calderon, (D-Montebello) requires recyclers to take thumbprints of individuals selling copper, copper alloys, aluminum and stainless steel. Sellers must also show a government ID and proof of their current address. Recyclers who break the law face suspension or revocation of their business license and increased fines and jail time.
- [AB 1859](#) by Assembly member, Anthony Adams, (R-Hesperia) discourages the theft of fire hydrant fittings and fire department connections by creating a fine of not more than \$3,000 for any person who knowingly receives any part of a fire hydrant, including bronze or brass fittings and parts.
- [SB 447](#) by Senator, Abel Maldonado, (R-Santa Maria) assists local law enforcement officials in quickly investigating stolen metal and apprehending thieves by requiring scrap metal dealers and recyclers to report what materials are being scraped at their facilities and by whom on a daily basis. These rules already apply to pawn shop dealers.

The Governor also signed [AB 1778](#) by Assembly member, Fiona Ma, (D-San Francisco) to deter the theft of recyclables by requiring recyclers to obtain identifying information of individuals who bring in more than \$50 worth of CRV recyclables and newspapers. It also requires that payments of \$50 or more be made by check.