

NEED TO KNOW



Little Kamper

Independent Retailers Embrace Zero-Waste Propane for Recreation

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MANTECA, Calif.-- For independent sporting goods and hardware store employees, the moment is all too familiar. A customer walks in with dark green 1lb propane tanks. They bought the non-refillable tanks, used them, and are now looking for a proper place to dispose of them. The store does not accept them, and the cylinders often end up in landfills. And millions of people use millions of the 1lb tanks every year. In the waste stream, those tanks are hazardous waste. It's a substantial problem, particularly near recreation destinations like campgrounds, parks, and beaches.

But now, change has come to the world of 1lb propane tanks. And those same local retailers are leading the charge to reduce waste with an exchange program called Little Kamper propane.

Little Kamper propane uses sturdier 1lb tanks that are designed to be refilled in a program where customers buy, use, and then exchange their empty tanks for pre-filled replacements at participating Little Kamper retailers. And so far, it's local retailers who are signing up to offer their customers the zero-waste alternative to disposable tanks.

"Local retailers adapt quickly to the needs of their customers and the communities they serve," observed Josh Simpson, Vice President of Little Kamper propane. "Their eyes and ears are wide open when it comes to finding and trying new products. They also embrace the opportunity to adopt sustainable products that reduce waste and bring happy customers back for more."

Retailers Are Happy

The local retailers are happy campers. They have a bright green alternative to the dark green tanks, and things are progressing well.

"We are grateful to work with a great vendor partner like Little Kamper who has a great product that supports a mission of sustainability and environmental stewardship," offered Mark Schulein of Crown Ace Hardware in Huntington Beach, CA. "Our customers have been very supportive of this new option for their propane. That's what we call a win, win, win!"

"Little Kamper Propane is a great addition to our product assortment. Our customers love the option of purchasing a product that helps protect the environment!" enthused Katie Swanson from Next Adventure sporting goods in Portland, OR.

"Little Kamper is exactly the type of company and product that will continue to keep our outdoor retail business thriving," commented Josh Haring of The Mountain Air in San Luis Obispo, CA. "We're not only providing a great service, but a product that offers a solution to a problem we can all get behind wholeheartedly. We're also supporting a company in Little Kamper that supports us 100% while working to increase circularity in this industry."

Success in Yosemite Signals Growth in 2022

The Little Kamper program made a breakthrough when they reached an agreement with Aramark's Yosemite Hospitality, LLC to sell and exchange Little Kamper tanks in Yosemite's retail operations in 2020. Despite the challenges created by wildfires and COVID-19, the Little Kamper supply chain was never interrupted and sales were strong even though park visitation was well below normal. 2022 promises to be a year of big steps forward as other state and national park concession operators are adopting waste reduction practices to help conservation efforts within the parks. The exchange program leaves no waste to collect and the customers pay for the program.

The Little Kamper program started in Northern California and has expanded gradually to serve retailers in the Western US. In 2022, two new Little Kamper production facilities will open and the program service area will expand to cover all of the lower 48 states. "Propane is the most popular outdoor recreation fuel in America," explained Simpson, "and much of that recreation occurs in places that folks care about and want to preserve. We're offering people a tank that's designed for reuse in a program that's designed to reduce waste and protect our campgrounds, parks, and beaches in the process." With the support of local retailers and a growing number of outdoor enthusiasts, the future of zero-waste propane is looking bright green. For more information or find your nearest Little Kamper retailer, visit www.LittleKamper.com

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