



November 9, 2015

Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
County of Los Angeles
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room 869
Los Angeles, CA 90012

SUBJECT: Los Angeles County EPR Pharmaceuticals and Sharps Ordinance- SUPPORT

Dear Mayor Antonovich:

The signatories to this letter are in support of Los Angeles County's efforts to craft an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Pharmaceuticals and Sharps Ordinance with ample stakeholder input. Such an ordinance would ensure that manufacturers and producers of prescription and nonprescription drugs and sharps share in the responsibility of proper disposal of their products by developing a safe and convenient program to collect and properly manage unused/unwanted pharmaceutical and sharps waste from County residents.

EPR is a public policy option that recognizes the significant public health, environmental, occupational safety, and fiscal impacts resulting from some products at the end of their useful lives. It is successfully used around the world. Pharmaceuticals and sharps are exceptionally problematic to manage. Sharps in particular create a significant occupational safety hazard for solid waste and waste water workers.

The County of Los Angeles has a policy in support of EPR that dates back to November 5, 2008. As part of this original motion, the Board directed the County EPR Working Group to investigate options for reducing improper use and disposal of pharmaceuticals, as well as to actively support and pursue EPR legislation. The EPR Pharmaceuticals and Sharps Ordinance action by the Board of Supervisors is a continuation of the 2008 policy.

If adopted, Los Angeles County will finally have a customized collection system that is safe and convenient for consumers to dispose of household medications and sharps, just as they do in other countries, without putting an unfair burden on the county law enforcement officers to collect home generated medical waste. This supports an approach that promotes smaller government, lower tax and garbage rates, and a private-sector driven and funded program with proper local government oversight. The ordinance does not require manufacturers and producers to bear all of the responsibility for the impact of these products – it just requires a significant contribution to the efforts already funded by taxpayers and managed by local governments. It recognizes that industry has a role in managing the end-of-life consequences of their products when those products have substantial societal impacts at the end-of-life and that externalizing all the costs is just not fair, reasonable, nor result in a convenient system.

The signatories are in strong support of this important effort to craft legislation, with the industries and stakeholders. Attached is a list of elements that we recommend including in the ordinance to ensure that it is effective and easy to oversee and implement.

Sincerely,

Christine Flowers, Program Manager, California Product Stewardship Council

Heidi Sanborn, Executive Director, National Stewardship Action Council

Dr. Matt Willis, Public Health Officer, RxSafe Marin

April Rovero, Executive Director, National Coalition Against Prescription Drug Abuse

Graham Hamilton, Executive Committee Chairman Surfrider Foundation West LA / Malibu Chapter

Teresa Bui, Legislative and Policy Analyst, Californians Against Waste

Leslie Mintz Tamminen, Ocean Program Director, Seventh Generation Advisors

Andria Ventura, Toxics Program Manager, Clean Water Action

Stuart Moody, Board President, Green Sangha

J Michael Huls, Principal, Sustainable Environmental Management Co., Professor, Zero Waste Communities, Santa Monica College

Jodi Reid, Executive Director, California, Alliance for Retired Americans

Bill Allayaud, California Director of Government Affairs, Environmental Working Group

cc: County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors

Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Don Knabe