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LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE
900 SOUTH FREMONT AVENUE, ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91803-1331
P.O. BOX 1460, ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91802-1460
www.lacountyiswmtf.org

May 10, 2013

The Honorable Mike Gatto, Chair
Assembly Appropriations Committee
1020 N Street, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assemblyman Gatto:

**ASSEMBLY BILL 488 (AMENDED APRIL 23, 2013)
RECYCLING: HOUSEHOLD BATTERIES**

The Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) **supports** Assembly Bill 488 (AB 488). If enacted, AB 488 would require a producer of single-use household batteries or stewardship organization appointed by one or more household battery producers to create, finance, and manage an extended producer responsibility system for California consumers to safely and conveniently recycle used and expired primary batteries.

Pursuant to Chapter 3.67 of the Los Angeles County Code and the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (Assembly Bill 939 [AB 939], as amended), the Task Force is responsible for coordinating the development of all major solid waste planning documents prepared for the County of Los Angeles and the 88 cities in Los Angeles County with a combined population in excess of ten million. Consistent with these responsibilities and to ensure a coordinated, cost-effective, and environmentally sound solid waste management system in Los Angeles County, the Task Force also addresses issues impacting the system on a countywide basis. The Task Force membership includes representatives of the League of California Cities-Los Angeles County Division, County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, City of Los Angeles, waste management industry, environmental groups, the public, and a number of other governmental agencies.

The Task Force has been an ardent supporter of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation throughout the years. EPR legislation alleviates the burden imposed on local governments in managing products at the end of their useful life while shifting that responsibility over to the manufacturers and producers of those products.

In 2006, the California Universal Waste Rule made it unlawful to dispose of household batteries with conventional trash collections due to their toxic and corrosive chemical nature. Unfortunately, the State did not adopt any mechanism for enforcing this ban or providing an alternative mechanism for residents to properly dispose of these materials nor did they provide any funding to local government to do so. As a result, proactive local governments have been financing expensive battery collection and recycling

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programs using taxpayer and utility rate payer funds. The County of Los Angeles alone spends approximately \$200,000 each year managing the collection of spent household batteries via household hazardous waste (HHW) events, permanent HHW centers, and a partnership with County of Los Angeles libraries where residents can dispose of household batteries.

AB 488 would provide a privately financed mechanism for household battery producers to design and operate an EPR program to collect and properly manage batteries. The manufacturers can more efficiently collect and recycle their own products, thereby substantially reducing the costs borne by local government agencies while offering more accessible recycling opportunities for the public. AB 488 allows for appropriate oversight and enforcement by CalRecycle, which presents a middle ground of private and public sector responsibility—a characteristic of well written EPR legislation. AB 488 also outlines requirements for consistent and robust public outreach, proper financing, and clear recycling performance goals tied to specific dates. Moreover, the collection system would allow producers to recover scarce and valuable materials that would otherwise be lost to landfills.

For these reasons, the Task Force **supports** AB 488. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at MikeMohajer@yahoo.com or (909) 592-1147.

Sincerely,



Margaret Clark, Vice-Chair
Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/
Integrated Waste management Task Force and
Council Member, City of Rosemead

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cc: Assemblymember Das Williams
Each Member of the Assembly Appropriations Committee
Each Member of the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors
California State Association of Counties
League of California Cities
League of California Cities, Los Angeles County Division
Southern California Association of Governments
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
South Bay Cities Council of Governments
Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Heidi Sanborn, California Product Stewardship Council
Each Recycling Coordinator in Los Angeles County
Each Member of Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force