



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE
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GAIL FARBER, CHAIR
MARGARET CLARK, VICE - CHAIR

March 5, 2014

Senator Jerry Hill, Chair
Senate Environmental Quality Committee
State Capitol, Room 2205
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Hill:

**SENATE BILL 1014 (INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 13, 2014)
PHARMACEUTICAL WASTE: HOME-GENERATED**

The Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) **supports** Senate Bill 1014 (SB 1014). If enacted, SB 1014 would require producers of pharmaceuticals sold or distributed in the state to create and manage a product stewardship program that contains elements related to the collection and disposal of home-generated unused pharmaceutical waste including provisions for the payment of all administrative and operational fees related to the stewardship program. We support SB 1014 for the following reasons:

- It will mitigate the ongoing pharmaceutical drug abuse epidemic in California.
- Local governments spend millions each year implementing pharmaceutical collection programs; however, producers should share in the responsibility to properly manage this problematic waste.

Drug Abuse

Prescription drug abuse in California has skyrocketed in recent years as have hospitalization for overdoses. Abused pharmaceuticals are most often stolen from the medicine cabinets of friends and relatives, and this epidemic has led to an increase in crime in many communities in California. With no consistent or convenient disposal option for unwanted pharmaceuticals, the household medicine cabinet continues to be the source that fuels the prescription drug abuse epidemic that is sweeping California. One of the four top recommendations of the National Strategy on Preventing Prescription Drug Abuse is to have a safe and convenient method of disposal for prescription, over the counter, and veterinary medicines.

Local Government Resources

The County of Los Angeles alone spends millions each year implementing a Countywide Household Hazardous and Electronic Waste Program in order to educate and provide a convenient opportunity for residents to properly manage toxic products and materials including non-controlled pharmaceuticals. Moreover, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department manages a pharmaceutical waste collection program in conjunction with the County Departments of Public Health and Public Works for the collection of non-controlled as well as controlled pharmaceuticals. However, pharmaceutical waste collected through these programs accounts for an insignificant percentage of all the pharmaceutical waste generated within the 88 cities in Los Angeles County and over 150 unincorporated county communities. For too long, municipal governments have cobbled together local collection options that fail to meet public demand for safe disposal, draw resources from other vital government functions, create a patchwork of regulations, and fail to realize the efficiency that would come from a statewide program.

Producers Need to Share the Burden to Protect Human Health and the Environment

The Task Force has long been a strong supporter of product stewardship as a mechanism for protecting the public's health and safety and the environment at the source to address the unintended environmental impacts of products and shoulder a disproportional financial burden to manage the end-of-life costs of products, which in turn reduces costs for public agencies as well as ratepayers and taxpayers. SB 1014 is a free-market approach to more effectively manage the costs of managing unwanted and/or unused pharmaceuticals, allowing pharmaceutical manufacturers to develop a program in whatever way is most cost effective with minimal oversight from state regulators. A similar program has been successfully implemented in Canada for the last fifteen years. This stewardship system will ultimately lead to less illegal diversion, alleviate costs associated with the collection and disposal of unused pharmaceuticals from local government, reduce the ongoing pharmaceutical drug abuse epidemic in California, and reduce the environmental impacts of pharmaceuticals in waterways by simply making it easier and more convenient for consumers to empty their medicine cabinets of unwanted and unused pharmaceuticals.

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

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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.

For the foregoing reasons, we **support** SB 1014 and will continue to monitor and express our support as it moves through the legislative process. 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: Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson
Each Member of the Senate Environmental Quality Committee
California Product Stewardship Council
California State Association of Counties
League of California Cities
Each member of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
South Bay Cities Council of Governments
Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Westside Cities Council of Governments
Each City Mayor and City Manager in the County of Los Angeles
Each City Recycling Coordinator in Los Angeles County
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force