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LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE
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May 14, 2015

The Honorable Jimmy Gomez, Chair
Assembly Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Assembly Member Gomez:

ASSEMBLY BILL 1159 – SOLID WASTE: PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP: PILOT PROGRAMS

The Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) **supports** Assembly Bill 1159 (AB 1159) as amended April 21, 2015. This bill would establish a product stewardship pilot program for home-generated sharps waste and household batteries. The intent of this pilot program would be to establish a requirement for producers and/or product stewardship organizations to design and implement product stewardship plans for the effective collection and end-of-life management of these covered products.

Although it has been illegal to dispose of home-generated sharps waste in trash or recycling containers since 2008, the problem remains pervasive. This practice presents a dangerous and hazardous threat to sanitation handling professionals Statewide. Used sharps can carry infectious and even deadly diseases. There are many cases in recent years of solid waste workers and the general public coming into contact with illegally disposed sharps. Being punctured by a used sharp is a painful and stressful experience for the victim and their family, involving many medical visits and blood tests to determine if a long-term, or even life-threatening, disease has been transmitted from the puncture wound. It is also costly for employers and their insurers. Moreover, local governments have carried the financial burden of establishing, funding, and managing home-generated sharps collection programs.

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 programs using taxpayer and utility rate payer funds.

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, the waste management industry, environmental groups, the public, and a number of other governmental agencies.

The stewardship model proposed in AB 1159, as amended, has been a successful method of handling difficult materials as evidenced by California's paint stewardship program, which has already saved jurisdictions across the state millions of dollars. Among the most valuable components of AB 1159 is the requirement that CalRecycle report to the Legislature the amount of money saved in recovery costs by State and local governments as a result of its implementation, ensuring a continued monitoring of the program's fiscal viability.

The Task Force has been an ardent supporter of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation as a way to alleviate the burden imposed upon local governments in managing products at the end of their useful life while shifting a reasonable proportion of that responsibility over to the manufacturers and producers of those products.

For the foregoing reasons, the Task Force **supports AB 1159**. Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at MikeMohajer@yahoo.com or at (909) 592-1147.

Sincerely,



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

Enc.

cc: Assembly Member Richard Gordon
Assembly Member Das Williams
Assembly Member Mark Stone
Each member of the Assembly Appropriations Committee

Assembly Member Gomez

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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