SB 212 (JACKSON, GRAY AND TING) SHARPS AND PHARMACEUTICAL DRUG TAKE-BACK PROGRAMS – SUPPORT AS AMENDED AUGUST 27, 2018

ASSEMBLY FLOOR ALERT

On behalf of the organizations below, we write to express our STRONG SUPPORT for SB 212 (Jackson and Ting), which will establish a comprehensive statewide take-back system for sharps and medications. These products serve a vital need in protecting and preserving the health of Californians, but that is all the more reason to also protect Californians from the inherent risks that occur when these products are unwanted and require safe disposal. Both sharps and medications present significant and well-documented challenges for all Californians who should have access to safe and convenient disposal options because too often they end up in the trash, on riverbanks and beaches, and in our waterways.

Despite the fact that California law (SB 1305, Ch.64, Statues of2006) has prohibited home-generated sharps waste from being disposed of in trash or recycling containers, millions of needles are discarded improperly every year, resulting in an unacceptable risk of needle stick injuries for parks, hotel, solid waste, wastewater, sanitation and other workers as well as the general public.

CalRecycle estimates that 936 million sharps used by consumers in California each year, and approximately 31% of those are thrown in the trash. Additionally, a 2015 study by University of Massachusetts Lowell estimated 7% of needles are flushed, and needle stick injuries occur with unacceptable frequency. Improper disposal of sharps poses an unacceptable risk to many Californians, and the statewide sharps collection program contained in SB 212 will significantly reduce that risk.
Similarly, prescription, over the counter, and pet medications present significant problems when leftover if not properly secured and disposed of. There is no question that consumers have leftover drugs in their homes, which tend to be stockpiled, flushed, or thrown in the garbage. Leftover drugs and a lack of safe and convenient disposal options are fuel to the opioid epidemic and increase instances of accidental poisonings, and can cause environmental harm.

SB 212 (Jackson and Ting) addresses the myriad problems that exist due to the lack of a statewide system to manage these products at the end of their useful life. By requiring manufacturers of sharps and pharmaceutical drugs to create, fund, and participate in a statewide take-back system, this bill will take a groundbreaking step to ensure that California residents throughout the state have access to safe, convenient disposal methods of sharps and drugs to address important public health concerns.

This concept is built off well-functioning programs that exist all over the world. Effective take-back programs for these products are operated by manufacturers in Canada, Mexico, many countries in Europe and South America, 12 local jurisdictions throughout California (9 counties and three cities in Santa Cruz County). Establishing a comprehensive statewide system will provide harmonization and clarity for manufacturers and consumers alike.

California has debated this issue for long enough. We strongly urge you to take this logical next step to protect California consumers and workers. For these reasons, the organizations below are pleased to express our STRONG SUPPORT of SB 212 (Jackson and Ting) and respectfully request your “AYE” vote when this bill is heard the Assembly Floor.

Sincerely,

Doug Kobold, Executive Director, California Product Stewardship Council
Heidi Sanborn, Executive Director, National Stewardship Action Council
Sharon N. Green, Legislative & Regulatory Liaison, Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County
Mary Pitto, Regulatory Affairs Advocate, Rural County Representatives of California
Nick Lapis, Director of Advocacy, Californians Against Waste
William Grimes, Hazardous Materials Program Manager, County of Santa Clara
David Stitzhal, President, Full Circle Environmental, Inc.
Leslie Mintz Tamminen, Director, Seventh Generation Advisors
Mary Luna, Coastal and Marine Scientist, Heal the Bay
Anna Cummins, Co-Founder, Director of Global Strategy, The 5 Gyres Institute
Dianna Cohen, Chief Executive Officer, Plastic Pollution Coalition
Christopher Chin, Executive Director, The Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research, and Education
John Davis, Administrator, Mojave Desert and Mountain Recycling Authority
Beverly Hanstrom, CEO and Owner, Colorado Medical Waste, Inc.
Mike Mohajer, Commissioner, Los Angeles County SWM Committee/IWM Task Force
Laura McKaughan, President, Northern California Recycling Association
Angela T. Howe, Esq., Legal Director, Surfrider Foundation
Joe La Mariana, Executive Director, RethinkWaste
Roger S. Bailey, General Manager, Central Contra Costa Sanitary District
Wendy Sommer, Executive Director, StopWaste
Justin Malan, Executive Director, California Association of Environmental Health Administrators
Patrick Carter, Executive Director, Sonoma County Waste Management Agency
Glenn Hendricks, Mayor, City of Sunnyvale
Erin Evans-Fudem, Legislative Representative, League of California Cities
Eric Potashner, Vice President and Senior Director of Strategic Affairs, Recology
Kelly Moran, President, TDC Environmental
Andy Rodgers, Executive Director, The Russian River Watershed Association
Patty Garbarino, President, Marin Sanitary Service
Kelly Astor and Josh Pane, Legislative Representatives, California Refuse Recycling Council
Robert Carlson, General Manager, Mendocino Solid Waste Management Authority
Kreigh Hampel, Burbank Recycling Coordinator, CPSC Board Member
Colleen Foster, President, California Resource Recovery Association
Helen L. Hutchison, President, League of Women Voters of California
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Hernan Molina, Governmental Affairs Liaison, City of West Hollywood
Gretchen Olsen, Solid Waste Manager, City of Stockton
William Pollock, Program Manager, Alameda County Household Hazardous Waste Program
Andria Ventura, Toxics Program Manager, Clean Water Action
Nathan A. Miley, Alameda County Board of Supervisors
Steve Lautze, President, California Recycling Market Development Zones

cc: The Honorable Hannah-Beth Jackson, 19th Senate District
The Honorable Phil Ting, 19th Assembly District
The Honorable Adam Gray, 21st Assembly District
Graciela Castillo-Krings, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Brown