

June 19, 2018

The Honorable Bill Quirk
Chair, Assembly Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials Committee
LOB, 1020 N St., Room 171
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 212 (Jackson and Ting) Sharps and Pharmaceutical Drug Take-Back Program – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Quirk:

On behalf of the Upper Valley Waste Management Agency, I 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 become waste. Both sharps and medications present significant and well-documented challenges for all Californians but especially local governments and municipal workers when it comes to safe and convenient collection and disposal.

Despite the fact that California law (SB 1305 in 2006) has prohibited home-generated sharps waste from being disposed of in trash or recycling containers, millions of needles are discarded irresponsibly 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 936 million sharps used by consumers in California each year, approximately 31% of those are thrown in the trash. Another study by University Mass Lowell in 2015 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 of 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, addressing 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 Upper Valley Waste Management Agency is pleased to express our **STRONG SUPPORT** of **SB 212 (Jackson and Ting)** and respectfully request your **"AYE"** vote when this bill is heard in your committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Lederer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steven Lederer
Manager, Upper Valley Waste Management Agency

cc: Members and Consultants, Assembly Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials Committee
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