

Senate Bill 727

Solid Waste: Drug Abuse Prevention and Safe Disposal Program

Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson

SUMMARY

SB 727 would establish a pharmaceutical collection program to address the home storage and improper and illegal disposal of home-generated pharmaceuticals that has exacerbated concerns over increased drug abuse and impacts on water quality.

BACKGROUND

Some pharmaceuticals are banned from solid waste disposal sites and there are very few safe and convenient disposal options available to consumers. Serious social and environmental problems persist:

- The stockpiling of unused medications in the home allow for easier access for children and teens, thus fueling youth drug abuse. According to a National Institute on Drug Abuse-sponsored 2012 study by the University of Michigan, teens who abuse drugs are either obtaining them from friends or stealing them from friends or relatives without their knowledge. Researchers concluded, "...having leftover pills from an earlier prescription is a significant source for non-medically-supervised use."¹
- Poisoning is the fastest rising cause of accidental death among older adults, particularly from overdoses of prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications.
- Unintentional poisoning of adults over 60 resulting in hospitalization increased by 43% in Alameda County from 1998 to 2006.
- Unused pharmaceuticals--like toxic waste--need to be kept out of the municipal waste stream because they can leach into groundwater.
- Flushing medications into sewage systems harms the environment and contaminates the water we drink. As with other hazardous chemicals, these drugs cannot be screened by most wastewater treatment processes, thus creating a buildup of these chemicals in California waterways.
- A 2010 Associated Press investigation found 9 medications in watersheds near Los Angeles, Riverside, and Long Beach, leading to increased public health concerns about bacterial resistance to antibiotics and endocrine disruption in aquatic organisms.

¹ <http://monitoringthefuture.org/data/12data.html#2012data-drugs>

- According to the National Association of Water Agencies, birth control products in waterways have interfered with endocrine function, leading to decreased reproductive success and declines in fish populations. Antibiotics pose the threat of killing microbes and disrupting the entire food chain.

Solution – SB 727

SB 727 is a pure Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policy approach for home-generated pharmaceuticals. It would require the producers (manufacturers) of pharmaceuticals to develop and implement a collection system with oversight by CalRecycle, thereby establishing an effective and convenient collection program described in a stewardship plan and approved by CalRecycle.

Producers have the primary responsibility to design, operate and publicize a collection program for home-generated pharmaceutical products. Allowing the private sector to design and operate the program ensures it will be the most cost-effective and efficient system. SB 727 follows highly successful models in Canada and Europe that are very cost-effective and convenient programs for pharmaceuticals and hazardous and hard to handle waste, including, but not limited to: e-waste, paint, tires, batteries, compact fluorescent bulbs, sharps, mercury thermostats, and other mercury containing products. The bill also follows the efforts of Alameda County which recently became the first local government in the country to require producers of home-generated pharmaceuticals to develop and implement a collection system for the safe and proper disposal of these products.

SUPPORT (CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

- California Product Stewardship Council (co-sponsor)
- Clean Water Action (co-sponsor)
- California Alliance for Retired Americans (co-sponsor)
- Alameda County Board of Supervisors (co-sponsor)
- City and County of San Francisco (co-sponsor)
- County of Santa Barbara

CONTACTS

Linda Barr, Office of Senator Jackson, 916-651-4019, linda.barr@sen.ca.gov
Jason Schmelzer, CA Product Stewardship Council, 916-446-4656, ext. 1015, Jason@shawyoderantwih.com
Andria Ventura, Clean Water Action, 415-369-9166, Aventura@cleanwater.org

Continued list of support as of 10/10/13

Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
East Bay Municipal Utility District
Marin County Hazardous & Solid Waste Management
Joint Powers Authority
Breast Cancer Fund
Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District
City of Monterey
City of Covina
City of Sunnyvale
Environmental Working Group
City of Roseville
Environmental Justice Coalition for Water
Tamalpais Community Services District
City of Torrance
Yolo County Waste Advisory Committee
California State Association of Counties
Sonoma County Waste Management Authority
Monterey Regional Waste Management Authority
Green Cities California
Contra Costa Clean Water Program
Californians Against Waste
City of Chula Vista
West Contra Costa Integrated Waste Management
Authority
City of Ukiah
Sonoma County Water Agency
Keep California Beautiful
Natural Resources Defense Council
Castro Valley Community Action Network
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group
Delta Diablo Sanitation District
National Coalition Against Prescription Drug Abuse
Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management
Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force
Community Prevention of Alcohol & Drug-Related
Problems (Horizon Services, Inc.)
California Coastkeeper Alliance
Alameda County District Attorney Nancy O'Malley
Alameda County Board of Supervisors
Mayor and City Council of Palo Alto
Dublin San Ramon Services District
Consumer Federation of California
Breast Cancer Action
CLEAN South Bay
Health Care Without Harm
Sierra Club California
Community Water Center
Center for Environmental Health
Heal the Bay
Environment California

Physicians for Social Responsibility, Los Angeles
League of Women Voters of California
SEIU United Long Term Care Workers
Product Stewardship Institute
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
StopWaste.Org
California Association of Sanitation Agencies
California Veterinary Medical Association
Central Contra Costa Sanitary District
Three Valleys Municipal Water District
League of California Cities
Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors
Solid Waste Association of North America
Pharmacists Planning Service, Inc.
Rural County Representatives of California
Metropolitan Water District
County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Center for Biological Diversity
California Water Environment Association
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
Sonoma County Waste Management Agency
City of Santa Monica
Teleosis Institute
Goleta West Sanitary District
National Association of Clean Water Agencies
California Society of Health-System Pharmacists
City of San Jose
Tehama County Sanitary Landfill Agency
City of South San Francisco
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
Vallejo Sanitation and Flood Control District
Chula Vista Police Department
Butte County Sheriff's Office
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
Butte County Public Health
3 individuals