



COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICTS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

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GRACE ROBINSON HYDE
Chief Engineer and General Manager

January 4, 2016

The Honorable Hilda Solis, Chair, and Members
Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Chairwoman Solis and Members of the Board:

Los Angeles County Pharmaceuticals and Sharps Collection and Disposal Stewardship Ordinance – Support

On behalf of the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, I am pleased to submit comments on the preliminary draft Ordinance for Pharmaceutical and Sharps Collection and Disposal Stewardship in Los Angeles County. By way of background, the Sanitation Districts provide wastewater and solid waste services to over 5.5 million people in 78 cities and unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. The Sanitation Districts are pleased to support the County's effort through our participation on the County's Pharmaceutical Working Group that was established pursuant to a Board Motion on June 2, 2015. The Sanitation Districts strongly support the adoption of this Ordinance by Los Angeles County, and we urge the County to move forward expeditiously.

In addition to broader social goals to reduce drug abuse and diversion of unused drugs, reduction of the disposal of unwanted pharmaceuticals is important because, when disposed by flushing down the drain or put out with household trash, wastewater treatment facilities and municipal solid waste facilities can serve as pathways for pharmaceutical waste residuals to enter the aquatic environment. Furthermore, sharps that are disposed in trash or flushed down the drain pose health and safety concerns for sanitation workers, as improperly disposed sharps may cause injuries to workers at materials recovery facilities where household solid waste is sorted and to wastewater system workers when flushed. Household trash disposal also presents additional opportunities for diversion, such as by scavengers that may discover drugs in trash left at the curbside, or at materials recovery facilities, where increasingly trash is sent for sorting prior to recycling or disposal.

The Ordinance will establish a Pharmaceuticals and Sharps Collection and Disposal Stewardship Program that will provide residents with safe, convenient and economical means of disposal of unwanted pharmaceuticals and sharps waste that will keep them from entering the environment. Source control is widely recognized as the most cost-effective approach to reduce

levels of contaminants in wastewater, and this program is an excellent example of a source control program that will prevent pollution from occurring in the first place. Since 2006, increased public awareness has been achieved through the "No Drugs Down the Drain" program operated by the Sanitation Districts, but a comprehensive stewardship program to collect unwanted pharmaceuticals and sharps waste would represent a significant step forward.

We therefore urge the Board of Supervisors to adopt the Ordinance to establish a Pharmaceutical and Sharps Collection and Disposal Stewardship Program for the residents of Los Angeles County. Please contact me if you have any questions about the Ordinance and how it relates to the Sanitation Districts' facilities and programs.

Very truly yours,



Grace Robinson Hyde

cc: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
Gail Farber, Department of Public Works
Angelo J. Bellomo, Department of Public Health