



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

MAY 2 2016

**OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR**

Hilda L. Solis, Chair
Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room 383
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Ms. Solis,

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Pacific Southwest Region supports the efforts of Los Angeles (LA) County to enact a "Stewardship Program for Collection and Disposal of Unwanted Covered Drugs and Unwanted Sharps" ordinance that would develop an extended producer responsibility program for unused medications and sharps from consumers. LA's consideration of an ordinance is consistent with EPA's preference for preventing introduction of pharmaceuticals into the environment through implementation of take-back programs which provides alternatives to disposal by flushing.

EPA's proposed rule "Management Standards for Hazardous Waste Pharmaceuticals" applies to healthcare facilities and pharmaceutical reverse distributors. EPA's proposal bans healthcare facilities from flushing hazardous waste pharmaceuticals down the sink and toilet. The regulatory requirements in the proposed EPA rule do not apply to households or to household pharmaceutical collection and take-back events and programs. LA County's proposed ordinance addresses the pharmaceutical waste generated by households that might be flushed down the toilet as a means of disposal.

After U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) published its study in 2000 documenting the presence of pharmaceuticals in streams across the United States, EPA's Office of Research and Development published research identifying that unused pharmaceuticals have commonly been flushed down the toilet, and that pharmaceuticals are present in discharges from wastewater treatment plants and in waterways impacted by these discharges. Current EPA research on pharmaceutical concentrations in wastewater effluent is expected to prioritize pharmaceuticals of greatest concern.

EPA discourages disposal of unwanted medicines through flushing, and supports efforts including stewardship ordinances such as the one LA County has proposed. This ordinance will offer an alternative for households to safely dispose of unwanted medicines. We appreciate your

efforts in this area. Please feel free to contact Zoe Heller of my staff with any questions at 415-972-3074.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jared Blumenfeld", written in a cursive style.

Jared Blumenfeld