



GAIL FARBER CHAIR
MARGARET CLARK VICE CHAIR

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE
900 SOUTH FREMONT AVENUE, ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91803-1331
P.O. BOX 1460, ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91802-1460
www.lacountyiswmtf.org

March 22, 2011

The Honorable Joe Simitian, Chair
Senate Environmental Quality Committee
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Senator Simitian and Committee Members:

**SUPPORT - SENATE BILL 515 (INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 17, 2011)
PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP: BATTERIES**

The Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) has reviewed Senate Bill 515 (SB 515) and is pleased to advise of its position to **support** this bill. This bill would require manufacturers of household batteries to establish product stewardship plans to ensure the safe collection and proper management of household batteries in California.

Pursuant to Chapter 3.67 of the Los Angeles County Code and the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (Assembly Bill 939, as amended), the Task Force is responsible for coordinating the development of all major solid waste planning documents prepared for the County of Los Angeles and the 88 cities in Los Angeles County with a combined population in excess of ten million. Consistent with these responsibilities and to ensure a coordinated and cost-effective and environmentally sound solid waste management system in Los Angeles County, the Task Force also addresses issues impacting the system on a countywide basis. The Task Force membership includes representatives of the League of California Cities-Los Angeles County Division, County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, City of Los Angeles, waste management industry, environmental groups, the public, and a number of other governmental agencies.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency estimates that each year Americans purchase approximately three billion dry-cell batteries to power items such as television remote controls, radios, watches, and a multitude of other products. Nevertheless, household batteries are a concentrated source of heavy metals such as lead, mercury, cadmium, and nickel. Improperly disposed batteries may have a negative impact on the environment, potentially causing serious health risks to humans and animals. As a result, effective February 8, 2006, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control classified household batteries as Universal Waste and banned them from being disposed in landfills under the California Universal Waste Rule.

Since local governments throughout California are currently held responsible for ensuring the proper collection and management of Universal Waste, this classification imposed an additional unfunded mandate on local governments to collect and manage household batteries. Local governments, and by extension the general taxpayers, are forced to pay between \$800 and \$2,700 per ton to properly dispose collected batteries. Los Angeles County alone spends approximately \$200,000 each year managing these efforts via household hazardous waste (HHW) events, permanent HHW centers, and a partnership with County of Los Angeles (County) libraries where residents can dispose of household batteries. This is in addition to the costs to properly manage batteries purchased by the County and the 88 cities in Los Angeles County.

The Task Force is a supporter of product stewardship as a mechanism for protecting the public's health and safety and the environment at the source while in turn reducing costs for local governments to address the unintended environmental impacts of products. If enacted, SB 515 would shift the responsibility for the safe and proper management of household batteries back towards their manufacturers and other entities involved in the product chain by requiring manufacturers to develop and implement a product stewardship plan with escalating collection rate targets. This will alleviate the burden placed on local governments and taxpayers to manage household battery waste while gradually removing local governments from the end-of-life management process.

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Therefore, the Task Force **supports** SB 515. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at (909) 592-1147.

Sincerely,



Margaret Clark, Vice-Chair
Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/
Integrated Waste Management Task Force and
Council Member, City of Rosemead

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cc: Each Member of the California Senate Environmental Quality Committee
Senate Majority Leader Ellen Corbett
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Legislative Delegation
Each Member of the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors
Each City Mayor and City Manager in the County of Los Angeles
California State Association of Counties
League of California Cities
League of California Cities, Los Angeles County Division
Southern California Association of Governments
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
South Bay Cities Council of Governments
Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Each City Recycling Coordinator in Los Angeles County
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force