

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday December 14, 2010

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CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO – FIRST CITY IN US TO PASS PHARMACEUTICALS STEWARDSHIP LEGISLATION

SAN FRANCISCO (December 14, 2010) — San Franciscans took a big step towards accessing convenient opportunities to safely manage their unused drugs at no additional increase in taxes or garbage rates. To that end, the City passed on first reading an ordinance assigning the responsibility to pharmaceutical companies to fund, design and operate unused drug collection program in the City starting September 1, 2011.

Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, the author of the ordinance, heard the public demand for expansion of the City funded pharmaceutical collection program and from the Department of the Environment staff which knew there was no sustainable funding source to continue or expand the program. “San Franciscans want to protect their water and public health by having convenient and sustainably funded collection program for unused pharmaceuticals,” stated Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi. “I look forward to bringing ratepayers some relief from a very costly problem.”

San Francisco has been an active supporter of promoting the concept of Product Stewardship, otherwise known as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) as a policy approach that shifts the responsibility for waste management costs from solely being the burden of taxpayers and ratepayers to include manufacturers of products who can compete to reduce collection and management costs. To that end, the City is one of 110 California local governments and hundreds of businesses that support the California Product Stewardship Council.

“Taxpayers and garbage ratepayers have hit their limit and are ready for private sector solutions that are good for the environment and the economy.” said Heidi Sanborn, Executive Director of the California Product Stewardship Council. “We are grateful that the City has shown that local governments can require companies that sell products into their jurisdiction to pay the full costs to manage products when they become ”waste.” Even though many pharmaceutical companies already participate in stewardship programs in Canada and Europe, they have not voluntarily offered to do it here in California.”

Supporters of the ordinance included a wide variety of clean water and waste organizations. The Board of Supervisors will hold a second vote on the ordinance on January 4, 2011. If passed a second time, the ordinance will go to the Mayor for approval.

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