



For Immediate Release
September 1, 2018

Contact: Heidi Sanborn
(916) 217-1109

CALIFORNIA SENATE UNANIMOUSLY PASSES STATEWIDE DRUG AND NEEDLE TAKE-BACK PROGRAM TO BE PAID FOR BY PRODUCERS

California Leads the Nation On Safe Drug and Needle Disposal with SB 212

(Sacramento, CA) – The California State Senate unanimously, on a vote of 39-0, passed SB 212 (Senator Jackson, Assemblymembers Ting and Gray), which will establish a comprehensive statewide take-back system for sharps and medications. If signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown, SB 212 will be the first in the nation to establish a comprehensive, producer-funded take-back program to provide safe and convenient disposal options for home-generated pharmaceutical drugs and sharps waste.

“The California Product Stewardship Council has worked tirelessly for the last 8 years to get the pharmaceutical industry to work with us to put in place a statewide take-back program,” said Heidi Sanborn, Senior Advisor and former Executive Director of the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC). “It took passing nine county ordinances and the hard work of Senator Jackson and Assemblymembers Ting and Gray as well as many others to successfully negotiate a compromise with the pharmaceutical industry to make this happen. This is a public health and safety bill whose time has come and we sincerely hope that Governor Brown will sign this into law.”

SB 212 addresses the myriad of problems that exist due to the lack of a statewide system to manage these products at the end of their useful life. By requiring manufacturers of sharps and pharmaceutical drugs to create, fund, and participate in a statewide take-back system, this bill will take a groundbreaking step to ensure that California residents throughout the state have access to safe, convenient disposal methods of sharps and drugs to address important public health concerns.

While these products serve a vital need in protecting and preserving the health of Californians, this is all the more reason to also protect Californians from the inherent risks that occur when these products are unwanted and require safe disposal.

(more)

[CalRecycle](#) estimates 936 million sharps used by consumers in California each year, approximately 31% of those are thrown in the trash. [Another study by University Mass Lowell in 2015](#) estimated 7% of needles are flushed, and needle stick injuries occur with unacceptable frequency. Improper disposal of sharps poses an unacceptable risk to many Californians, and the statewide sharps collection program contained in SB 212 will significantly reduce that risk.

Similarly, prescription and over the counter medications present significant problems when leftover if not properly secured and disposed of. There is no question that consumers have leftover drugs in their homes, which tend to be stockpiled, flushed, or thrown in the garbage. Leftover drugs and a lack of safe and convenient disposal options are fuel to the opioid epidemic and increase instances of accidental poisonings, and can cause environmental harm.

SB 212 will:

- Establish comprehensive, producer-funded take-back programs to provide safe and convenient disposal options for home-generated pharmaceutical drugs and sharps waste.
- Get excess drugs out of people's homes, preventing accidental poisonings and abuse, which fuel the opioid epidemic.
- Protect solid waste, parks, hotel, wastewater, sanitation, and other workers, river and beach clean-up volunteers, and the public from needle stick injuries.
- Preempt future local ordinances to ensure consistency and predictability for manufacturers.

For more information about SB 212, visit www.calpsc.org

###

California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC) educates both the public and private sectors about Product Stewardship and closely partners with business, jurisdictions, waste and recycling companies, manufacturers and others to promote and encourage sustainable practices and to recognize those companies who are taking a leadership role in participating in waste reduction and recycling.