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LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE
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April 11, 2013

The Honorable Luis A. Alejo, Chair
Assembly Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials Committee
1020 N Street, Room 171
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assembly Member Alejo:

**ASSEMBLY BILL 403 (AMENDED MARCH 19, 2013)
SOLID WASTE: HOME-GENERATED SHARPS**

The Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) **supports** Assembly Bill 403 (AB 403). If enacted, AB 403 would require a producer of home-generated sharps, or a stewardship organization that the producers designate, to submit a home-generated stewardship plan to CalRecycle that would provide for the development and implementation of a recovery program to manage the end-of-life of home generated sharps.

Pursuant to Chapter 3.67 of the Los Angeles County Code and the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (Assembly Bill 939 [AB 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, 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 Task Force has been a strong supporter of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation throughout the years. EPR legislation alleviates the burden imposed on local governments in managing products at the end of their useful life while shifting that responsibility over to the manufacturers and producers of those products.

Used sharps can carry infectious and deadly diseases. There are many cases in recent years of solid waste workers and the general public coming into contact with illegally disposed sharps. Being punctured by a used sharp is a painful and stressful experience for the victim and their family, involving many medical visits and blood tests to determine if a long-term or life-threatening disease has been transmitted from the puncture wound. It is also costly for employers and the insurers.

Since 2008, it has been illegal to dispose of home-generated sharps waste in trash or recycling containers, and all sharps waste must be transported to a collection center in a sharps container. Consequently, local governments have carried the financial burden of funding, establishing, and managing home-generated sharps collection programs. Los Angeles County alone spends tens of thousands of dollars each year managing the collection of used home-generated sharps waste via household hazardous waste (HHW) events, permanent HHW centers, and a partnership with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

Despite these efforts, used sharps are too often illegally disposed in the trash, down the toilet, dumped on beaches, and found in parks where they pose a health hazard for members of the public and solid waste workers. Providing for the producers of medical sharps to share the responsibility of properly managing this dangerous waste would improve the efficiency of collection, mitigate the financial burden from the public for managing such wastes, and reduce the incidences of unintended contact with used sharps.

AB 403 is the right solution to this public health problem because it creates a privately managed and financed system to allow consumers to safely and conveniently dispose of used home-generated sharps while relieving local governments from some of the costly burden of managing these wastes. It gives producers freedom to design and create their own collection system and build off of existing programs while providing the appropriate state oversight and enforcement by CalRecycle. AB 403 also outlines requirements for financing, consistent and robust public outreach, and clear performance goals tied to specific dates. This collection system will ultimately lead to less illegal disposal of used sharps, a decrease in solid waste worker injuries, and fewer injuries to the general public.

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For these reasons, the Task Force **supports** AB 403. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at MikeMohajer@yahoo.com or (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: Assembly Member Mark Stone
Assembly Member Suan Talamantes Eggman
Each Member of the Assembly Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials Committee
Each Member of the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors
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
Heidi Sanborn, California Product Stewardship Council
Each Recycling Coordinator in Los Angeles County
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
Each Member of Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force