



GAIL FARBER  
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](http://www.lacountyiswmtf.org)

April 29, 2010

The Honorable Leland Yee  
State Capitol, Room 4074  
Sacramento, CA 94248-0001

Dear Senator Yee:

**SENATE BILL 1029 (AMENDED APRIL 7, 2010)  
SHARPS EXCHANGE SERVICES**

The Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) **supports if amended** Senate Bill 1029 (SB 1029), which would, among other things, amend portions of the California Health and Safety Code to push back the sunset date for the Disease Prevention Demonstration Project (DPDP) and establish criteria for distribution of sharps by specified entities to an individual without a prescription. While the Task Force commends your efforts to address this critical public health issue, we are concerned that the improper disposal of used needles and sharps may further the spread of HIV infection, viral hepatitis, and other potentially deadly blood-borne infections. This is a critical public health issue which needs to be addressed by the proposed legislation.

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 DPDP is a successful program allowing pharmacies that meet certain conditions to provide 10 or fewer hypodermic needles to customers without a prescription. SB 1029, if enacted, would modify DPDP's sunset clause of December 31, 2010, to December 31, 2018, and amend the restrictions imposed on the amount of sharps

distributed by pharmacies, physicians, veterinarians, or a person licensed by the California Board of Pharmacy to an individual for personal use from the current limit of 10 to 30. SB 1029 would also require pharmacies (*but not physicians, veterinarians, and/or persons licensed by the California Board of Pharmacy*) that provide nonprescription sharps to implement one or more the following options for customers to manage sharps waste:

- Establish an onsite, safe, sharps collection and disposal program.
- Furnish, **or make available**, mail-back sharps disposal containers authorized by the United States Postal Service that meet applicable state and federal requirements, and shall provide tracking forms to verify destruction at a certified disposal facility (emphasis added).
- Furnish, **or make available**, a personal medical sharps disposal container that meets applicable state and federal standards (emphasis added).

A recent study conducted by UCLA Center for Health Policy Research Institute, indicated there are over 518,000 diagnosed diabetics living in Los Angeles County of which approximately 118,000 known individuals use self-injections one to five times a day. If those individuals administer a self-injection once a day, they would generate approximately 43 million syringes each year. In addition, diagnosed diabetics must monitor their blood glucose levels by using a lancet, which is also classified as home-generated sharps waste. As a result, it is estimated that over 220 million sharps wastes are generated each year in Los Angeles County alone. It is of great concern that the improper disposal of sharps waste can put anyone at risk for needle-stick injuries. More importantly, used needles can transmit blood-borne pathogens such as the viruses that cause AIDS (HIV) and various forms of hepatitis. As such, improper disposal of sharps waste poses a significant risk to public health and the environment.

While the goals of SB 1029 are laudable, the Task Force is concerned that it may lead to an increase in the amount of sharps waste generated, while not doing enough to ensure that those additional sharps are properly managed, and potentially result in the further spread of the HIV infection, viral hepatitis, and other potentially deadly blood-borne infections. Thus, the Task Force recommends that the bill be amended to require (a) participating pharmacies to accept, at no charge to the customer, any sharps waste that is brought back to the pharmacy through this program instead of making the requirement optional, while allowing participating pharmacies to also provide the two latter sharps disposal options described above provided the phrase "...or make available," is either deleted or revised to read "...or make available **at no cost to customer**," and (b) participating physicians, veterinarians, and persons licensed by the California Board of Pharmacy to also provide similar collection programs as those required from the participating pharmacies.

The Honorable Leland Yee  
April 29, 2010  
Page 3

Therefore, the Task Force **supports SB 1029, if amended**, and stands ready to assist the Legislature in amending the bill to address the above concerns. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at (909) 592-1147.

Sincerely,

*Margaret Clark*

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

SK/RG:

cc: Senate President Pro Temp Darrell Steinberg  
Senator Dean Florez, Majority Leader  
Senator Dennis Hollingsworth, Minority Leader  
Each Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee  
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Legislative Delegation  
Mark Horton, Director, California Department of Public Health  
Kenneth H. Schell, California Board of Pharmacy  
Each Member of the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors  
Each City Mayor in the County of Los Angeles  
California State Association of Counties  
League of California Cities  
League of California Cities, Los Angeles County Division  
California Product Stewardship Council  
Southern California Association of Governments  
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments  
South Bay Cities Council of Governments  
Gateway Cities Council of Governments  
Jonathan E. Fielding, Director, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health  
Helene Calvet, Health Officer, City of Long Beach Department of Public Health  
Takashi Wada, Director/Health Officer, City of Pasadena Department of Public Health  
Lewis Pozzebon, Director/Health Officer, City of Vernon Department of Public Health  
Each City Recycling Coordinator in Los Angeles County  
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force