



SWANA[®]

SOLID WASTE ASSOCIATION
of North America

April 22, 2013

CALIFORNIA CHAPTERS

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LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE

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The Honorable Das Williams
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 4005
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 488 (Williams) – Battery Extended Producer Responsibility
SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Williams,

The Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) is the world's largest association of solid waste professionals (7700 members). SWANA's California chapters represent more than 900 members. SWANA is committed to advancing the practice of environmentally- and economically-sound management of municipal solid waste. SWANA's California Legislative Task Force (LTF) is responsible for representing the California Chapters on legislative and regulatory issues.

California banned the disposal of household batteries in the trash in 2006 because of the metals and toxic/corrosive chemicals contained in batteries. The result of this ban is that consumers must take their used batteries to municipal facilities that accept household hazardous waste, a universal waste hauler, or an authorized recycler. The greatest burden falls on the local governments that must divert resources to safely manage household batteries.

Despite efforts to recover batteries at authorized collection programs, estimates of the percentage of batteries recycled each year in California hover around 5% - nearly a decade after they were banned from disposal. This is a very strong indication that the current efforts to protect human health and the environment from the toxic and corrosive chemicals found in household batteries are failing.

AB 488 is the right solution because it creates a privately managed and financed system to allow consumers to safely and conveniently dispose of used batteries. The bill allows producers to design their own collection system and/or build off of existing programs, but also provides for oversight and enforcement by CalRecycle. AB 488 also contains important performance benchmarks to ensure that fewer household batteries are illegally disposed of in the trash.

SWANA is supportive of AB 488 because it implements a proven model that will reduce costs for cash-strapped local governments and give consumers a hassle-free option for complying with the ban imposed in 2006.

Sincerely,

Jason Schmelzer
SWANA Legislative Advocate