



June 19, 2018

The Honorable Bill Quirk  
Chair, Assembly Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials Committee  
LOB, 1020 N St., Room 171  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 212 (Jackson and Ting) Sharps and Pharmaceutical Drug Take-Back Program – SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Quirk:

On behalf of the California Chapters of the Solid Waste Association of North America's (SWANA) Legislative Task Force (LTF), I am pleased to write to you in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **SB 212 (Jackson and Ting)**, which will establish a comprehensive statewide take-back system for sharps and medications. These products serve a vital need in protecting and preserving the health of Californians, but we must also remember the importance of protecting Californians from the inherent risks that occur when these products become waste. Both sharps and medications present significant and well-documented challenges for all Californians but especially local governments and municipal workers when it comes to safe and convenient collection and disposal.

SWANA is the world's largest association of solid waste professionals (10,000 members). SWANA's three California chapters represent more than 900 of those members. SWANA represents much of the publicly-owned and -operated solid waste management infrastructure in the state and the local governments responsible for implementing waste diversion and recycling programs. The LTF is responsible for representing the California Chapters on legislative and regulatory issues. SWANA is committed to advancing the practice of environmentally- and economically-sound management of municipal solid waste. Further, the LTF has long supported effective extended producer responsibility and product stewardship policies.

Despite the fact that California law (SB 1305 in 2006) has prohibited home-generated sharps waste from being disposed of in trash or recycling containers, millions of needles are discarded irresponsibly every year, resulting in an unacceptable risk of needle stick injuries for parks, hotel, solid waste, wastewater, sanitation and other workers as well as the general public.

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, over the counter, and pet 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.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATES

Jason Schmelzer and Melissa Immel

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**SB 212 (Jackson and Ting)** 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, addressing important public health concerns.

This concept is built off well-functioning programs that exist all over the world – effective take-back programs for these products are operated by manufacturers in Canada, Mexico, many countries in Europe and South America, and 12 local jurisdictions throughout California (9 counties and three cities in Santa Cruz County). Establishing a comprehensive statewide system will provide harmonization and clarity for manufacturers and consumers alike.

California has debated this issue for long enough. We strongly urge you to take this logical next step to protect California consumers and workers. For these reasons, the SWANA LTF is pleased to express our **STRONG SUPPORT** of **SB 212 (Jackson and Ting)** and respectfully requests your **“AYE”** vote when this bill is heard in your committee. Thank you for your consideration of this important measure.

Sincerely,



Melissa Immel  
Legislative Advocate  
Shaw / Yoder / Antwih, Inc.

cc: Members and Consultants, Assembly Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials Committee  
The Honorable Hannah-Beth Jackson, 19<sup>th</sup> Senate District  
The Honorable Phil Ting, 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly District  
The Honorable Adam Gray, 21<sup>st</sup> Assembly District  
Graciela Castillo-Krings, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Brown

