



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)

DEAN D. EFSTATHIOU  
CHAIRMAN

April 28, 2008

<<Name>>  
<<Address>>  
<<City, State, Zip>>

Dear Assembly Member:

**SUPPORT REQUEST FOR ASSEMBLY BILL 501  
EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR  
PROPER DISPOSAL OF PREFILLED SYRINGES**

The Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) requests your support for Assembly Bill 501 (AB 501), which among other things, would require pharmaceutical manufacturers of prefilled syringes, prefilled pen needles, or other prefilled injection devices to provide at users request, either a container for the safe disposal of the used sharps or a postage prepaid mail-back sharp container.

Pursuant to Chapter 3.67 of the Los Angeles County Code and the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (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 its 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, the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, the City of Los Angeles, the waste management industry, environmental groups, the public, and a number of other governmental agencies.

Starting September 1, 2008, State law (SB 1305, Chapter 64 of the State Statute of 2006) will prohibit a person from placing home-generated sharps waste (hypodermic needles, pen needles, intravenous needles, lancets, etc.) in any containers used for collection of solid waste, recyclable materials, etc. Additionally, this law requires that home-generated sharps waste shall be transported only in a sharps container, as defined, or other container approved by the Department of Health Services (Public Health) or local enforcement agency, and provide that this waste shall only be managed at specified locations consistent with existing law.

It is estimated that approximately nine million people administer self-injections outside traditional health care facilities each year. Many of these self-injectors are people with diabetes and patients receiving home health care who throw their sharps into their trash containers. However, with an estimated three billion sharps being generated and disposed of each year, these sharps pose a significant health risk to everyone, especially to solid waste collectors, recyclers and landfill workers who often handle sharps that are thrown into the trash.

Based on a 2005 study conducted by UCLA Center for Health Policy Research Institute, there are over 518,000 diagnosed diabetics living in Los Angeles County of which approx 118,000 known individuals use self-injections one to five times a day. If those individuals administer a self-injection not more than once a day, this will total to approx 3.6 million home-generated sharps/syringes in just one once or approx 43 millions syringes in one year. In addition, each of the 518,000 diagnosed diabetics must monitor their blood glucose levels by using a lancet, which is also classified as home-generated sharps waste. As a result, on an annual basis over 220 million sharps are generated in Los Angeles County alone that need to be disposed of in a proper manner. 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), hepatitis B and C. As such, improper disposal actions pose a significant threat to the public health and the environment.

Your support for AB 501, would help close the loophole in current law which leaves consumers at a quandary which on one hand prohibits them from placing sharps in their trash, and on the other provides them with no way to safely dispose of them. It would also help to keep sharps out of the solid waste stream and protect workers from possible injuries or health risks caused by contact with hypodermic needles. Finally, AB 501 would ensure that constituents are provided with a safe needle disposal system that benefits all Californians.

Therefore, the Task Force respectfully requests your support and the follow up efforts to ensure enactment of AB 501, in order to protect the California citizens' health and safety as well as the environment.

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Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any question, please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at 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 Sandre Swanson  
Assembly Member Loni Hancock  
Assembly Member Mervyn Dymally  
Each Members of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force