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SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE
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August 20, 2009

The Honorable Joe Simitian
State Capitol, Room 2080
Sacramento, CA 94248-0001

Dear Senator Simitian:

**SENATE BILL 486 (AMENDED JULY 1, 2009)
MEDICAL WASTE: SHARPS WASTE**

The Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) **supports** SB 486, which among other things, requires on or after July 1, 2010, that pharmaceutical manufacturers that sell or distribute medication which is self-injected at home via hypodermic needles or other sharps devices, to submit a plan to the California Integrated Waste Management Board identifying how they will provide for device collection and disposal.

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 City of Los Angeles, the waste management industry, environmental groups, the public, and a number of other governmental agencies.

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 just 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 are generated each year in Los Angeles County alone that must be properly disposed. 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's health and the environment.

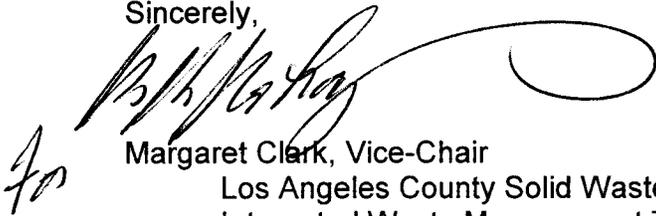
Current law prohibits a person from placing hypodermic needles or similar devices in any container used for collecting solid waste or recyclable materials. Additionally, such waste

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devices must be transported only in a container approved by the California Department of Health Services or local enforcement agency, and this waste must be managed at specified locations consistent with existing law. Local governments have done their part by implementing localized programs to manage sharps, but lack the funding, capacity, and an effective statewide network to adequately handle the number of sharps generated. Thus, without a convenient means to dispose of sharps, most used needles still end up in household trash where they pose a significant risk of injury and/or infection to custodial workers and solid waste employees.

SB 486 requires that sharps manufacturers develop and submit a plan for the safe collection and proper disposal of sharps waste. Because of the risk that sharps waste can pose, it is crucial the State identifies what companies are doing to help their customers address the issue through education and safe disposal alternatives. SB 486 represents an important first step toward expanding manufacturer responsibility in the management of sharps. Therefore, the Task Force **supports** SB 486. If you have any questions, 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
Mayor, City of Rosemead

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cc: Senate President pro Darnell Steinberg
Assembly Speaker Karen Bass
Senator Dennis Hollingsworth, Minority Leader
Each Member of the Assembly Committee on Appropriations
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Delegation
Each Member of the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors
Each City Mayor in Los Angeles County
California State Association of Counties
Gateway Cities Council of Governments
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
Each City Recycling Coordinator in Los Angeles County
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force