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TXPSC Statement on Methods of Disposing of Unused Pharmaceuticals

The Texas Product Stewardship Council (TxPSC) is comprised of representatives from over 30 local governments in Texas. Our mission is to encourage the shift of our waste management system from one focused on government operated and ratepayer financed waste disposal/diversion to one that is augmented by producer responsibility to reduce public cost and drive improvements in product design that promote environmental sustainability.

Pharmaceuticals are strong example of a modern product that needs product stewardship. "Trace" amounts of drugs show up in treated waste water discharge and have even been found in landfill leachate in Maine when tested by that state's Department of Environmental Protection. The need for safe and convenient pharmaceutical disposal is paramount to our public health to prevent poisonings at home, youth experimental drug abuse and as a pollution prevention approach for reducing the amount of pharmaceuticals entering the waste stream, be it in wastewater or municipal solid waste (MSW).

However, even the Federal Government's guidance from both the White House and the FDA steer consumers primarily to disposal through local government MSW systems as the best option. Simply passing the buck to local governments is not a prudent or sustainable method of pharmaceutical disposal. Municipalities can not continue to afford to be the only entities attempting to find the means for specialized disposal of unique and/or toxic products. Producers of these products must be engaged to take back their products and relieve this burden on municipalities.

In light of the current report by the TCEQ Pharmaceutical Disposal Advisory Group in conformance with SB 1757, the Texas Product Stewardship Council strongly supports an ongoing producer take back program involving unused pharmaceutical collection boxes/kiosks in pharmacies or other secure, permanent facilities located throughout our state.

Thank you for your efforts in finding a solution to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Kim Mote
Chair,
Texas Product Stewardship Council
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