

July 27, 2010

Honorable Henry A. Waxman, Chair
Energy & Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2204 Rayburn
House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: H.R. 5809, the Safe Drug Disposal Act of 2009

Dear Chairman Waxman and Members of the Energy & Commerce Committee:

We, the undersigned organizations, urge the Energy & Commerce Committee to consider and support H.R. 5809, The Safe Drug Disposal Act, introduced by Congressman Inslee. We urge the Committee to expedite this statutory change to the Controlled Substances Act so that the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) can create new regulations governing safe, convenient, cost-effective drug take-back programs.

Legally prescribed controlled substances comprise roughly 11% of all prescription medicines. Left lingering in homes, tossed in the garbage, or flushed down toilets, these drugs may be taken accidentally or intentionally abused, or could contaminate waterways. H.R. 5809 amends the Controlled Substances Act to provide additional legal avenues for safe, convenient, cost-effective disposal of controlled substances by patients and caretakers through drug take-back programs. H.R. 5809 would:

- Allow medicines to be returned to additional licensed entities. Current requirements that only law enforcement can collect pharmaceutical controlled substances adds cost, places burdens on local police and sheriffs, and is not necessary for safe and secure drug take-back programs.
- Allow long-term care facilities to return their patients' controlled substances to a duly authorized return location; allow those legally entitled to dispose of a decedent's property to deliver decedent's medicines to a take back program.
- Takes into consideration that drug take-back programs be designed and operated conveniently and cost-effectively to meet the needs of our diverse communities. Federal requirements should allow a range of collection options, including drop-off at easily accessible locations such as pharmacies, and avoid burdensome requirements that do not enhance security or effectiveness, such as inventorying collected medicines.
- Require EPA to create recommendations on the most environmentally sound disposal method.

We urge the Committee to take action on H.R. 5809 and move it forward as quickly as possible to a floor vote. Action on H.R. 5809 is a critical step to support our state and community level efforts to ensure that unneeded controlled substances and other medications are securely collected from homes and disposed of safely through drug take-back programs.

Sincerely,

John Lovick, Snohomish County Sheriff
Snohomish County Sheriff's Office

Gina Grappone, Executive Director
Science and Management of Addictions (SAMA)

Ed Gottlieb, Pretreatment Coordinator
Ithaca Area Wastewater Treatment Facility (NY)

Dave Hartke, President
Illinois Counties Solid Waste Management
Association

Shirley Reitz,
Associate Director of Pharmacy Clinical Services
Group Health Cooperative

Paul Ritter, National Coordinator
The National Prescription Pill and Drug Disposal
Program Network (P2D2 Program)

Jeff Ruch, Executive Director
Public Employees for Environmental
Responsibility (PEER)

Robb Miller, Executive Director
Compassion & Choices

Leslie Emerick, Government Consultant
Home Care Association of WA

Ty Trenary, Chief of Police
Stanwood (WA) Police Department

Robert F. Sullenberger, Chief
Arlington (WA) Police Department

Ronald J. Bergman, M.D., M.P.H.
Lower Elwha Health Clinic
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Leslie Emerick, Government Consultant
Association of Advanced Practice Psychiatric
Nurses (AAPPN)

Richard Nance, Director
Utah County Division of Substance Abuse

LeeAnne Beres, Executive Director
Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power &
Light

Dan Connolly, Pharmacy Project Manager
Bartell Drugs

Dave Oostindie, Environmental Services
Supervisor
City of Wyoming, MI

Leslie Emerick, Government Consultant
WA State Hospice and Palliative Care Organization
(WSHPCO)

Steven G. Gilbert, PhD.,
Institute of Neurotoxicology & Neurological
Disorders

Patric Slack, Commander
Snohomish Regional Drug Task Force

Jay Watson, PhD., Administrator
Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in
King County (WA)

Bill Sheehan, Executive Director
Product Policy Institute

Dennis M. Woodsinger, Senior Environmental
Engineering Technician
Town of Colonie, NY Environmental Services
Division

Richard Smith, Chief of Police
City of Marysville (WA)

Carey G. Bond, P.E., Project Manger
Fleis & VandenBrink Engineering, Inc.

Susan C. Sheary
King County Democratic Central Committee

Heather Shute, Advocate
Environment Washington

John H. Turner, Chief of Police
Snohomish, WA

Walter Willis, Executive Director
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Kye Nordfelt, MPA, Analyst and SMART
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Utah County Division of Substance Abuse

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Anthony L-T Chen, MD, MPH, Director of Health
Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, WA

Bob Crannell, Chief of Police
Mill Creek Police Department, WA

Heather Trim, Urban Bays and Toxics Program
Manager
People for Puget Sound

Kevin Kiernan, Director, Solid Waste Division,
King County Department of Natural Resources and
Parks

Cc

Congressman John D. Dingell
Congressman Edward J. Markey
Congressman Rick Boucher
Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr.
Congressman Bart Gordon
Congressman Bobby L. Rush
Congresswoman Anna G. Eshoo
Congressman Bart Stupak
Congressman Eliot L. Engel
Congressman Gene Green
Congresswoman Diana DeGette
Congresswoman Lois Capps
Congressman Mike Doyle
Congresswoman Jane Harman
Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky
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Congressman Jay Inslee
Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin
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