

June 21, 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. 1191, the Safe Drug Disposal Act of 2009

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

The City of Palo Alto urges the Energy & Commerce Committee to consider and support H.R. 1191, 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. 1191 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. 1191 would:

- Modify the current requirement that law enforcement officers be involved in the normal operations of residential drug take-back programs. This adds cost, places burdens on local police and sheriffs, and is not necessary for safe and secure drug take-back programs.
- Allow a broad range of caretakers to dispose of controlled substances through drug take-back programs, including: patients, family members or friends who act as caregivers, hospice workers, long term care facilities, boarding homes for the elderly, school nurses, and veterinarians. All of these people may have drugs they need to dispose of due to illness or providing care.
- Ensure that federal requirements allow drug take-back programs to 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.
- Ensure environmentally sound disposal of waste medicines by means other than flushing down sinks or toilets or disposing in a municipal solid waste landfills.

We urge the Committee to take action on H.R. 1191 and move it forward as quickly as possible to a floor vote. Action on H.R. 1191 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick Burt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "P".

Patrick Burt
Mayor

- c. Congresswoman Anna Eshoo
Assemblymember Ira Ruskin
Palo Alto City Council
James Keene, Palo Alto City Manager