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TO: House Committee on Health Care  
FROM: Cindy Robert, Metro  
RE: Support for HB 2386  
DATE: March 6, 2017

Metro is the regional government of the Portland metropolitan area, with major responsibilities in managing and reducing the region's solid waste and protecting and overseeing a regional system of parks and natural areas. Metro serves a population of over 1.5 million, providing services and educational resources that protect the environment and reduce the amount and toxicity of the solid waste stream.

Metro strongly supports HB 2386. Oregonians need a safe, secure and convenient system of disposing of their unused medicines. Unused medicines pose serious health and safety risks. These include accidental deaths or poisonings and abuse by teens who think prescription drugs are somehow safer than street drugs. Providing this system will reduce the ability of those rummaging through trash bins to find them.

Collecting harmful and hazardous materials is an important part of the mission of Metro's Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) program. Our program includes two permanent facilities and a series of neighborhood collection events that serve more than 55,000 customers a year. While we collect some unused medicines (non-controlled substances) through our sites, we look to others' efforts to take medicines that are federally controlled substances. We have recently started a program to provide prepaid mail back envelopes to customers for those controlled medicines. However, the mailers cost us eight dollars each. While this is an important service to offer our customers, the more convenient system for both controlled and uncontrolled substances HB 2386 would offer is by far a better approach.

Metro believes that the product stewardship approach taken in HB 2386 is the most effective and appropriate solution to the unwanted medicines problem. The makers of these products should take responsibility for the safe management of the unused portion of their products. As have all Oregonians, residents of the Metro region greatly benefit from similar statewide stewardship programs for paint (PaintCare) and electronics (Oregon E-Cycles). Based on our experience with those stewardship programs, we believe HB 2386 is well crafted to address the necessary elements of an efficient and effective statewide product stewardship program.

Metro believes HB 2386 will benefit all the citizens of Oregon.