



Working with more than 95 community wastewater treatment and stormwater management agencies
to protect Oregon's water

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March 3, 2017

Representative Greenlick, Chair
House Committee on Health Care
900 Court Street, NE, Hearing Room E
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB2386 and HB2645 relating to drugs

Dear Chair Greenlick and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies (Oregon ACWA), I am writing to express **ACWA's support for HB2386 and HB2645**, which would protect public and environmental health by increasing opportunities for the public to dispose of their drugs properly.

The Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies is a private, not-for-profit organization of Oregon's wastewater treatment and stormwater management utilities, along with associated professionals. Our 135 statewide members are dedicated to protecting and enhancing Oregon's water quality. Our members provide wastewater and stormwater services to 2.4 million Oregonians, serving 64% of Oregon's homes and businesses.

ACWA members protect public health by treating wastewater for discharge into the State's waterways. We remove pathogens and toxins from the water, but cannot completely remove all traces of drugs that are flushed down resident's toilets – a disposal method that is often encouraged by other groups in the absence of a statewide, comprehensive drug take-back program. Because of this, these residual pharmaceuticals can make their way into the State's waterways, drinking water and fish.

ACWA has been involved in efforts to increase drug take back opportunities as a means of reducing public health and environmental exposure for many years. ACWA sponsored and organized the *Oregon Pharmaceutical Take Back Stakeholder Group*, which produced its final report in 2007 – see <http://www.oracwa.org/pdf/oregon-drug-takeback-report.pdf> While that report is 10 years old, and some of the research is out of date, the fundamental conclusions are

Michelle Cahill, Chair Jennifer Belknap Williamson, Vice Chair
Amy Pepper, Secretary/Treasurer

the same. Our organization remains convinced that Oregon needs a drug take back program now to reduce avoidable poisonings of children and adults, to prevent intentional misuse of unwanted prescription drugs, and to protect drinking water, water quality, fish and other aquatic species.

HB2386 and HB2645 will provide increased drug take back opportunities to the public by requiring those who profit from production of these drugs to pay the costs of proper disposal. We urge your support for these bills.

Sincerely,

Susan L. Smith
Executive Director