



March 20, 2019

Representative Andrea Salinas, Chair
House Committee on Health Care
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon

RE: HB 3273 – Support for Drug Take Back

The City of Eugene supports HB3273 and asks for a 'Do Pass' recommendation from the Committee. The bill addresses three main issues that are of concern and impact to the City, including increasing convenience for safe and suitable disposal of unused medication, reduction of impact on public safety personnel and resources, and alignment with existing Oregon product stewardship policy. With approximately 1/3 of all purchased medicines going unused, the failure to dispose of unused pharmaceuticals in a timely, safe, and environmentally responsible way can lead to serious health and safety risks including drug abuse, accidental poisonings, water pollution, and damage to aquatic life.

In our area, there exist few convenient options for residents looking to responsibly dispose of their unused medication. Within Lane County, there are seven municipally-managed disposal kiosks for unused medications, two of which are located in Eugene. All seven kiosks are located at law enforcement stations with only three allowing access after normal business hours. While these kiosks perform a valuable service to our community and environment, the lack of convenience and access to these sites does little to address the scale of the problem.

The Eugene Police Department (EPD) manages one of the main kiosks in Eugene, which includes the maintenance, packaging, storage, and transportation to destruction. Currently, EPD staff must manage the activities weekly and expends roughly 1,055 hours per year on this program. While some of this work is completed by non-sworn officers, the transportation for destruction must be accompanied by an armed officer from the Evidence Control Unit to the disposal center in Brooks, Oregon. Many of the drugs that are dropped off with EPD are from commercial businesses such as nursing homes and pain management clinics. In effect, the City's general fund is subsidizing the operations of private for-profit businesses in the effort to increase public and environmental safety through the proper disposal of these products.

Oregon has been a leader in efficient, convenient, and cost effective product stewardship laws. Starting with the Oregon Bottle Bill and more recently with the E-Cycles program for consumer electronics and Paint Care program for architectural paint products, our state has led the nation in developing end of life programs that put the responsibility on the product producer rather than public agencies. All Oregonians will benefit through this proven method to deal with harmful waste, the bill aligns with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's Vision 2050 Vision for Materials Management, and assists our law enforcement agencies to safely handle prescription medications. Please support HB 3273 with your 'Do Pass' recommendation.

Sincerely,
Submitted electronically

Ethan Nelson
Intergovernmental Relations Manager