



Coos Bay Fire & Rescue

450 Elrod Avenue, Coos Bay, OR 97420 • 541-269-1191

February 6, 2026

To: Oregon State Legislative Assembly

Re: Opposition to SB 1573 – Impacts to Needle Disposal Programs

I oppose SB 1573 as it relates to needle disposal programs and sharps drop-off sites. Since early 2020, Coos Bay Fire & Rescue has operated sharps disposal boxes at two fire stations. The needle disposal program has worked exactly as intended. The boxes are heavily used, well managed, and have not created safety issues or neighborhood impacts.

Early concerns from the community focused on fears that the boxes would be misused, vandalized, or ignored. That has not happened. Instead, the primary users are residents safely disposing of diabetic needles and prescription injection supplies. This provides a no-cost, safe option for people who would otherwise have to pay for containers and disposal. It also keeps needles out of the trash, parks, and public spaces.

The needle disposal program is a regional collaboration with HIV Alliance, Coos Bay, North Bend, and Charleston fire departments, and Bay Area Hospital, which provides final destruction of collected sharps. This coordinated approach has improved safety for residents, first responders, and public works crews.

We also have volunteer groups who clean local parks and public areas. When they encounter discarded needles, they now have a safe and legal way to dispose of them immediately. That directly reduces the risk of needle exposure to children and the public.

Restricting the placement of disposal sites based on proximity to schools or child care facilities would likely reduce access to these boxes. That would push needles back into homes, trash cans, and public spaces. Those are unintended outcomes that work against child safety, not for it.

I understand and respect the concern for protecting children. Based on our direct experience, accessible needle disposal programs improve safety and reduce exposure risk. Limiting where disposal boxes can exist would undermine that progress.

I am available to answer questions or share data and operational experience from Coos Bay regarding the benefits of our needle disposal program.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeff Adkins".

Jeff Adkins
Fire Chief