



City of Santa Rosa

December 2, 2015

Mark Landman, Chair
Board of Directors
Russian River Watershed Association
300 Seminary Avenue
Ukiah, CA 95482

Subject: Letter of Conceptual Support for the evaluation of the feasibility of a safe medicine disposal ordinance that addresses the long-term need for prescription drug or pharmaceutical disposal options for our communities

Dear Chair Landman:

The City of Santa Rosa appreciates the Russian River Watershed Association's (RRWA) strong support of the concept of pharmaceutical producer responsibility for the creation, funding, and management of a regional program that will provide safe and convenient disposal options of unwanted, expired, and unneeded prescription drugs or pharmaceuticals for the community.

Unwanted, expired, and unneeded prescription drugs or pharmaceuticals are currently collected in Sonoma and Mendocino Counties through the Safe Medicine Disposal Program. Funding for the Program is provided by RRWA, the City of Santa Rosa (with funding from its Subregional Partners), the Sonoma County Water Agency, and others. Since the Program's inception in 2007, over 90,000 pounds of pharmaceuticals have been collected and properly disposed of regionally, demonstrating a considerable demand for disposal options. Santa Rosa's portion of the Safe Medicine Disposal Program (funded by the Subregional Partners) started in 2008 and has collected 65,000 pounds, a little more than 70% of the regional total.

Collection totals have increased every year without reaching a plateau, so it is logical to project that the collection totals will continue to increase. The cost to manage the program and conduct outreach and education is also projected to increase year-to-year. Currently, there is no long-term plan for funding.

Out of concern for public health, safety, and the environment, local government agencies, by default, have carried the burden of financing and managing prescription drug or pharmaceutical take-back (aka safe medicine disposal) programs, historically financed by taxpayers or utility ratepayers.

JOHN SAWYER
Mayor

CHRIS COURSEY
Vice Mayor

ERIN CARLSTROM
JULIE COMBS
ERNESTO OLIVARI S
TOM SCHWEDHELM
GARY WYSOCKY

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Considering the ongoing potential threat of improperly disposed of pharmaceuticals to public health, safety, and the environment including water quality in the watershed, the City acknowledges and supports RRWA's substantial interest in evaluating the feasibility and potential development of a regional drug stewardship program through a safe medicine disposal ordinance. Similar to other communities in California, the City agrees that it is time for our region to require pharmaceutical producers to take the responsibility of properly managing the pharmaceutical products that they create.

A manufacturer-funded collection and disposal program for unwanted, expired, and unneeded prescription drugs would significantly increase safe and convenient disposal options for City of Santa Rosa residents, enabling collection of larger quantities of unwanted, expired, and unneeded prescription drugs and pharmaceuticals and reducing the potential impacts to public health, safety, and the environment.

For these reasons, the City of Santa Rosa strongly supports the concept of pharmaceutical producers taking an active role in the creation, funding, and management of a regional drug stewardship program that will provide safe and convenient disposal options of unwanted, expired, and unneeded prescription drugs or pharmaceuticals for the community.

The City of Santa Rosa thanks the Russian River Watershed Association for continuing its work on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "awyer", with a large, stylized flourish above it.

JOHN SAWYER
Mayor

JS/sks

c: Andy Rodgers, Executive Director – Russian River Watershed Association
Rita Miller, Deputy Director of Environmental Services, City of Santa Rosa

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