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July 27, 2012

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors
1221 Oak Street, Suite 536
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Staff Contact: kamika.dunlap@acgov.org

RE: Support for Alameda County Safe Medication Disposal Ordinance

Honorable Members of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), I am pleased to express our support for the Alameda County Safe Medication Disposal Ordinance and would like to offer our congratulations to the Board for their innovative and groundbreaking approach to dealing with the safe disposal and management of pharmaceuticals.

According to the California Product Stewardship Council, \$225 billion in medications are prescribed each year, and are expected to grow to \$550 billion per year by 2017. Currently, 40% of prescribed drugs aren't taken. Without the proper means to dispose of unused and expired medications, people often dump them down drains, flush them down toilets and throw them in the trash. This poses a significant water quality and public health issue as these medications leave trace amounts in treated water. In addition, residential stock-piling of unused household medications leads to easy access and drug abuse by children and teens.

Current federal and state policies often make local government responsible for waste diversion, enforcing product disposal bans, hazardous waste collection, or other costly waste management programs, without providing funding. An Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework approach supports a shift in financial and physical responsibility from local government to those benefiting economically from the sale of the products they produce.

The Alameda County Safe Medication Disposal Ordinance is the first ordinance in the country to require producers of pharmaceuticals to share in the responsibility for the end of life costs of unused medications. This program will serve as a model for other communities across the State that are struggling to deal with this complex issue. CSAC would be happy to share your experience with other counties that are looking for a better end of life management system for pharmaceuticals.

CSAC applauds your hard work on this issue and we look forward to collaborating with you in the future to share your model with California counties.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Keene".

Karen Keene
CSAC Senior Legislative Representative