



## Leading Organizations Applaud First-in-Nation Local Ordinance to Make Drug Industry Pay to Safely Collect Medicines

For Immediate Release

Oakland, CA (July 24, 2012) Today, three leading U.S. organizations in the product stewardship field applauded the historic 5-0 vote by the Alameda County, California, Board of Supervisors to [require](#) pharmaceutical companies whose products are sold in the County to pay for collection programs for unwanted medicines.

The **Product Stewardship Institute**, **Product Policy Institute**, and **California Product Stewardship Council** are leaders of the national movement to shift responsibility for spent products from taxpayers to the producers who design, make, and sell them. The problem with unwanted pharmaceuticals is that, without a safe and convenient collection program, there are significant risks of prescription drug abuse, accidental poisonings, aquatic impacts, and pollution of our nation's waterways.

"Today, Alameda County took a stand and said if the federal government and state legislators fail to act to protect public health and the environment, and the product manufacturers refuse to share in the responsibility for their products which they profited from, local governments will take action because the public is demanding it", said Heidi Sanborn, Executive Director of the [California Product Stewardship Council](#).

The movement to have manufacturers pay for the end-of-life costs of their products is growing both among leading corporations and state and local governments in the United States. In Canada and other countries, an increasing number of companies already take responsibility for providing convenient collection of numerous unwanted products, including leftover medications.

The issue of "who pays" for collection programs is bigger than just pharmaceuticals. "Dozens of new industry programs and state laws to reduce the lifecycle impacts of products in the U.S. have been initiated or adopted in the last decade" said Scott Cassel, Chief Executive Officer of the [Product Stewardship Institute](#). There are now producer responsibility laws in 32 states for products including paint, mercury-containing fluorescent lamps, and electronics.

But asking corporations to share in the responsibility should not be such a fight. Bill Sheehan, Executive Director of the [Product Policy Institute](#) said, “There are national discussions on packaging initiated by Nestle Waters and voluntary take-back programs funded by rechargeable battery producers. But not one pharmaceutical company has offered any help to safely collect unwanted medications, like they do in other countries. The industry failed to act. They forced government to mandate what’s fair: that they share in the responsibility.”

## CONTACTS

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