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April 7, 2016

The Honorable Toni Preckwinkle
Cook County Board President
Cook County Board of Commissioners
118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear President Preckwinkle:

The Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) and the other signees of this letter strongly support Cook County's proposed ordinance (16-1983) to establish a producer financed and managed collection program. In doing so, this bill provides proper disposal options for unwanted and expired pharmaceuticals—both controlled and uncontrolled substances—thus providing County residents with a convenient way to safely dispose of unused medications.

Mounting evidence demonstrates the need for safe and secure disposal options for pharmaceuticals that match the convenience of purchasing them. Drugs improperly stored in the home or disposed in the trash may end up in the hands of children, teenagers, and potential abusers. A lack of safe disposal options contributes to the national drug abuse epidemic that is now the leading cause of injury death in the U.S., ahead of car accidents. Moreover, when flushed or thrown away, many pharmaceuticals end up in waterways, causing harm to the ecosystem and potentially affecting sources of drinking water.

Over 92 laws in the U.S. require producers to finance and manage the collection of 12 types of consumer products, including electronics, paint, thermostats, carpet, mattresses, fluorescent lamps, and batteries. Producer-financed programs save taxpayers money, fairly incorporate the true cost of managing these products in the purchase price, and provide a direct financial incentive to pharmaceutical companies to reduce unnecessary prescriptions. This financing mechanism is a key element to the sustainability and success of take-back programs.

Pharmaceutical collection programs are considered the safest, most effective drug disposal solution by Illinois state and local government agencies – including the [Illinois Environmental Protection Agency](#) and the [Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County](#). Unfortunately, the pharmaceutical industry continues to heavily promote trash disposal, a discrepancy that leads to public confusion and misinformation. Passing this ordinance would ensure that the industry promotes the safest solution.

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Currently, seven local jurisdictions and one state have passed a law or provision similar to the proposed ordinance in Cook County, and many state and local governments around the country are introducing similar bills. Cook County has the chance to stand among these leaders as one of the largest U.S. counties taking this important step to prevent drug-related death and injury, and reduce water contamination.

We commend the Board of Commissioners on drafting a strong piece of legislation, and offer PSI's technical assistance in refining the convenience section, which currently appears to contain two conflicting standards.

Thank you for your strong leadership on this important issue.

Respectfully,

Scott Cassel, CEO/Product Stewardship Institute, Inc.

Marta Keane, Chair/Illinois Product Stewardship Council

David Van Vooren, Executive Director/Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County

Dean Olson, Director/Will County Resource Recovery & Energy Division