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Santa Cruz Becomes First U.S. City to Require Drug Manufacturers and Retailers to Collect and Dispose of Unwanted Prescription Drugs

SANTA CRUZ, CALIF. — On Aug. 9, 2016 Santa Cruz became the first U.S. city to adopt an ordinance requiring that the responsibility of safe and orderly disposal of drugs and sharps waste be placed on the manufacturers and/or producers of the products, while encouraging product design that minimizes negative impacts on human health and the environment at every stage of the product's lifecycle.

The new [Extended Producers Responsibility Ordinance](#) requires manufacturers and retailers to develop programs to dispose of unneeded medications and unwanted hazardous medical products, such as needles and syringes. The ordinance goes into effect 30 days from adoption when each of the 30+ pharmacies located in Santa Cruz will have to present a plan to the city for how they intend to meet the new requirements.

“Until now, our sharps and drug take back program was based on an environmental benefits analysis,” said City of Santa Cruz Environmental Compliance Manager Akin Babatola. “But the new ordinance brings a social justice component. Since 2007, the City has budgeted \$7-10,000 annually in program costs to keep our rivers and ocean clean from these chemical wastes. From now on, we will have the manufacturers and distributors pick up the tab; the new ordinance incorporates the shared responsibility of the producer at the post-consumer stage of their products’ life cycle.”

Alameda was the first U.S. county to enact such an ordinance in 2012. In 2015 the U.S. Supreme Court denied the pharmaceutical industry's petition for certiorari in a challenge against Alameda County's ordinance. This ruling validated this model for control at county and municipal levels. A total of 9 counties nationwide have enacted similar ordinances to Santa Cruz. All of these ordinances prohibit the manufacturers and/or producers of the products from charging any visible fee at point of sale or point of collection.

"We are excited that local governments like the City of Santa Cruz are taking action to ensure the producers of medicines and needles will design and fund convenient collection systems so that these chemical and hazardous wastes are safely disposed of as they are in Canada," said Heidi Sanborn, Executive Director of the National Stewardship Action Council. "We will continue to see cities and counties across the country adopt policies to mandate their participation, but our hope is that soon we can collaborate to find a national solution that we can all support."

The Santa Cruz [Extended Producers Responsibility Ordinance](#) and more information are available at www.cityofsantacruz.com.

About the City of Santa Cruz

The City of Santa Cruz is a dynamic, nationally recognized coastal community in California. With renowned attractions and climate, it is a destination for thousands of visitors as well as a highly desirable location in which to live, work and play. As the seat of Santa Cruz County, the city is home to an engaged community and diverse economy with world-renowned educational, public health and technological institutions which attract talent from across the globe. Natural resources and recreational opportunities are unparalleled in Santa Cruz as the city is bordered by majestic redwood forests and the Monterey Bay Marine Sanctuary. Additionally, the arts, entertainment and cultural opportunities in Santa Cruz are matched by few other cities of its size.

About National Stewardship Action Council (NSAC)

NSAC was founded in 2015 as an affiliate of the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC). CPSC, which is a 501(c)(3) environmental education and protection organization under IRS rules, may only conduct limited legislative lobbying activities. CPSC's recent legislative successes in California have come with increasing demands from across the country for CPSC's assistance, creating the need for an entity that can carry CPSC's work forward without lobbying limits, and on a national scale. In contrast to CPSC, NSAC is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization that will engage primarily in lobbying and advocacy work for EPR and Product Stewardship, anywhere in the U.S. and at any level of government interested in EPR legislation. NSAC will also be able to become involved in elections for public office, should such activities be needed to further its mission.

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