



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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PRESS RELEASE

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COUNTY DRUG AND SHARPS PROGRAM GOES STATEWIDE

California Governor Jerry Brown on Sunday signed a groundbreaking new statewide drug and sharps takeback bill into law which is modeled after a program pioneered by the County of Santa Cruz.

Authored by state Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson and Assemblymembers Phil Ting and Adam Gray, Senate Bill 212 is based on a successful program in effect in Santa Cruz County and local cities in some form since 2006. The state bill requires the pharmaceutical industry to provide free safe and secure take-back locations for both leftover medications and used needles throughout California by 2021.

“This program has a big impact on our environment without impacting the cost of medicine or medical products,” said County Resource Planner Tim Goncharoff, who helped write the local ordinance and testified in support of the bill before the Legislature. “Providers bear some responsibility for the impacts of their products, and we were happy to once again show the way for the rest of California.”

From being one of the first communities to establish recycling programs to current climate change litigation against oil companies, the County has been an environmental policy leader for several decades. Ordinances introduced in Santa Cruz County have been adopted by more than a hundred other agencies – including those as far away as Seattle and New York City – including prohibitions on single-use plastic bags, straws and Styrofoam; the regulation of electronic waste and food service products; and much more.

SB 212 was sponsored by the California Product Stewardship Council and enjoyed support from local governments, industry associations, consumer safety advocates, and environmental organizations.

Santa Cruz County has received numerous awards for its leadership, including recently from the National Recycling Coalition and the North American Hazardous Materials Management Association.