



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

100 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611

Legislation Text

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TRANSMITTAL LETTER FOR BOARD MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 3, 2015

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE

Mr. David St. Pierre, Executive Director

Authority to negotiate an intergovernmental agreement with the Cook County Sheriff's Office to expand their Prescription Drug Collection Program (*As Revised*)

Dear Sir:

Many Americans are unaware that forgotten and unused prescription medicines in their home are highly susceptible to diversion and misuse. Studies show that the majority of prescription drugs abused in the United States are obtained from acquaintances without their knowledge. In 2011, there were over 22,000 deaths from prescription drug overdoses.

Under the Controlled Substances Act, the only legal option for disposing of these medications was turning them over to law enforcement. Many people simply kept expired and unneeded medication in their homes, threw them out with the trash, or flushed them down the toilet. Flushing contaminates the water supply, because wastewater treatment processes can not remove pharmaceutical products.

In 2010, Congress passed the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act authorizing the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to implement regulations for the collection and disposal of prescription drugs. That same year, the DEA started the National Drug Take-Back Day initiative partnering with local law enforcement agencies to inform the public and invite them to surrender their unwanted pharmaceuticals at authorized collection sites on a designated day.

The District's police force has participated in every DEA Drug Take-Back Day by establishing as many as four collection sites at our water reclamation plants. Other local participants include the City of Chicago and the Cook County Sheriff's Office. Over the years, more than 4 million pounds of pharmaceuticals have been collected and properly disposed of nationwide.

When the rules of the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act were finalized in September of 2014, the DEA decided that it would no longer sponsor national Drug Take-Back events. After a new Director was appointed, that decision was recently reversed; however, ongoing continued support of the drug take-back effort at the national level, remains uncertain.

Therefore, an intergovernmental agreement with the Cook County Sheriff's Office is desired to continue and sustain the progress made to inform the public about the consequences of improperly disposing of pharmaceuticals and protect the water supply.

It is respectfully requested that the Board of Commissioners grant authority to negotiate an intergovernmental agreement with the Cook County Sheriff's Office to expand their Prescription Drug Collection Program.

Requested, Eileen M. McElligott, Administrative Services Manager, KH:SKL:WG

Respectfully Submitted, Frank Avila, Chairman Committee on Public Health and Welfare
Disposition of this agenda item will be documented in the official Regular Board Meeting Minutes of the Board of Commissioners for September 3, 2015