



NYPSC
NEW YORK PRODUCT
STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL



**PRODUCT
STEWARDSHIP
INSTITUTE**

Sustainable Solutions to Protect Our Environment

March 16, 2017

Chairman Ted B. Morton
Chair, Energy & Environment Committee
Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street - 4th Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

RE: Support for Erie County Pharmaceutical Water Pollution Act

Dear Chairman Morton and Members of the Committee:

The New York Product Stewardship Council and the Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) strongly support Legislator Patrick Burke's proposed legislation to establish a manufacturer financed and managed drug take-back program in Erie County. This bill would create proper disposal options for unwanted and expired pharmaceuticals—both controlled and non-controlled substances—providing residents with a convenient way to safely remove unused medications from their homes.

Mounting evidence demonstrates the need for secure medication disposal options that match the convenience of purchasing them. Pharmaceuticals improperly stored in the home or placed 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 and death in the U.S., ahead of car accidents. Moreover, when flushed or thrown away, pharmaceuticals end up in waterways, harming the ecosystem and potentially affecting sources of drinking water.

Producer-funded drug take-back programs save government and taxpayers money, fairly incorporate the true cost of managing these products in the purchase price, and provide a direct financial incentive for pharmaceutical companies to reduce unnecessary prescriptions. This funding mechanism is a key element to the sustainability and success of these programs.

Drug take-back programs are considered the safest, most effective drug disposal solution by the [NY Department of Environmental Conservation](#), many NY local government agencies (including [Rockland County](#)), and organizations such as the [Medical Society of the State of NY](#) and the [National Association of Counties \(NaCO\)](#).

Unfortunately, the pharmaceutical industry continues to heavily promote trash disposal, a discrepancy that leads to public confusion. Passing this ordinance would ensure that the industry promotes the safest solution in Erie County.

New York Product Stewardship Council
1971 Western Ave., #1195 | Albany, NY 12203 | (917) 597-2119
contact@nypsc.org | www.nypsc.org

In the U.S., sixteen local governments and two states (Massachusetts and Vermont) have already passed similar drug stewardship laws. Many other state and local governments have introduced similar legislation, including Oregon and Washington State. Erie County has the chance to stand among these leaders by taking this important step to address the opioid epidemic, accidental overdoses, and aquatic contamination.

PSI is a national nonprofit dedicated to reducing the health and environmental impacts of consumer products. We have 47 state government agency members and hundreds of local government agency members nationwide. PSI also has 110 formal partnerships with businesses, organizations, academic institutions, and non-U.S. governments. Our organization has been working on the issue of safe drug disposal for over a decade, including helping to improve the federal Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010 and subsequent Drug Enforcement Administration regulations in 2014, which allow retail pharmacies to become authorized collectors of controlled substances. These changes opened the door to significantly more convenient take back, which is a key factor in increasing the amount of medications collected. PSI works closely with the New York Product Stewardship Council (NYPSC), which has made pharmaceuticals stewardship a priority issue.

NYPSC works to implement the principles of product stewardship in NY State by providing leadership, guidance, and resources (including policies, evaluations, and educational tools) to individuals, organizations, institutions, local governments, the state legislature, elected officials, and manufacturers. NYPSC is made up of diverse experts including local and state government, waste management, recycling, and wastewater experts, environmental groups, public health organizations, and others with a stake in product stewardship. The organization educates all relevant stakeholders about the benefits of product stewardship, and provides a forum for the exchange of information regarding existing policies and programs. NYPSC has a Pharmaceuticals Committee that meets to coordinate efforts to promote new drug stewardship policies and programs.

We commend you for addressing NY State's drug abuse epidemic and protecting the environment by introducing the Erie County Pharmaceutical Water Pollution Act, which contains nearly all of the key elements of a strong drug take-back bill.

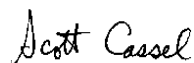
One missing key element that we strongly recommend you add to the bill is a specific numerical convenience standard to ensure that collection options meet residents' needs. If interested, PSI and NYPSC can recommend a reasonable convenience standard based on experience from existing programs.

Thank you for your strong leadership on this important issue.

Respectfully,



Andrew Radin, Chair
New York Product Stewardship Council



Scott Cassel, Founder & CEO
Product Stewardship Institute