



February 21, 2018

Honorable Kemp Hannon
Chair, Senate Health Committee
New York State Legislature
Capitol Building, Rm. 420
Albany, NY 12247

Honorable Aileen Gunther
Assembly Health Committee
New York State Legislature
Legislative Office Building, Rm. 826
Albany, NY 12248

RE: Support for S.7354 / A.9576 – Drug Take-Back Act

Dear Senator Hannon, Assemblywoman Gunther, and Members of the Health Committee:

The New York Product Stewardship Council (NYPSC) and the Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) strongly support S.7354, “same as” bill A.9576. We thank you for your leadership in promoting effective producer responsibility policy by introducing this legislation.

We believe the time is ripe for a manufacturer-funded drug take-back program in New York State. 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 too often 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. More than 2,000 people in New York State die annually from opioid overdose, most commonly from prescription pain relievers. Deaths from drug overdoses and chronic drug abuse in NYS have increased at an alarming rate of 71 percent between 2010 and 2015.

Moreover, when flushed or thrown away, many pharmaceuticals end up in waterways, causing harm to the ecosystem and potentially affecting sources of drinking water. To help address this problem, PSI and NYPSC promote drug take-back programs through our [best disposal practices](#) fact sheet as supported by state and local agencies across the US. For this strategy to work, laws are needed which create sustainable funding for such programs.

In the U.S., 21 local governments (including Rockland County, NY) and 2 states (Massachusetts and Vermont) have already passed laws which require drug companies to establish collection programs for both controlled and non-controlled substances, providing residents with a convenient way to safely remove expired and unwanted medications from their homes. Many other jurisdictions around the country have introduced similar legislation, including Erie County and Westchester County, NY.

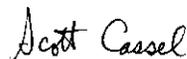
Our organizations are national authorities on the development of drug take-back laws and effective collection logistics. We will be submitting some recommendations for your consideration, and we offer our technical expertise to address any questions that may arise as the legislature considers this critically needed program aimed at protecting both public health and the environment. We urge all members of the Assembly and Senate Health Committees to support this bill.

Thank you again for your strong leadership on this important issue, and we look forward to supporting your efforts on safe drug disposal.

Respectfully,



Andrew Radin, Chair
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**CC: Members of the Assembly Health Committee
Members of the Senate Health Committee**

About PSI: 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 NYPSC, which has made pharmaceuticals stewardship a priority issue.

About NYPSC: 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.