

COMMITTEES
BANKING AND FINANCE
HUMAN SERVICES
NATURAL RESOURCES

SELECT COMMITTEES
CHAIR: COASTAL PROTECTION
CHAIR: EXPANDING ACCESS TO
CALIFORNIA'S NATURAL RESOURCES

Assembly California Legislature



MARK STONE
CHAIR, JUDICIARY
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, TWENTY-NINTH DISTRICT

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0029
(916) 319-2029
FAX (916) 319-2129

DISTRICT OFFICES
701 OCEAN STREET, SUITE 318B
SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
(831) 425-1503
FAX (831) 425-2570

99 PACIFIC STREET, SUITE 575G
MONTEREY, CA 93940
(831) 649-2832
FAX (831) 649-2935

April 27, 2015

Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation (CHSWC)
1515 Clay Street, 17th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Commissioners:

We want to thank the Commission on Health and Safety in Workers' Compensation for commissioning the study entitled "Infection Risk from 'Sharps' Injuries for Non-healthcare Workers." We requested this study in order to learn more about the frequency and severity of needlestick injuries in non-healthcare occupations. Such injuries are often the result of the illegal disposal of home generated sharps waste into general municipal waste streams. This study concludes that the number and severity of reported sharps injuries in non-healthcare occupational settings do not warrant a legislative solution to try to reduce their incidence.

Respectfully, we disagree with the conclusion of this study that no further action is necessary to mitigate the risk of needlestick injuries to non-healthcare workers, or to address the many other problems associated with illegally disposed sharps waste. We were disappointed that the study did not substantially go beyond presenting information that was already made available to the Legislature in a May 13, 2014 joint informational hearing between the Assembly Health Committee and the Assembly Labor Committee entitled "Worker Safety and Sharps Waste in Non-Healthcare Occupations." The study, in repeating the findings presented in that informational hearing, reiterated that from 2010-12, over 2,000 needlestick injuries to non-healthcare workers were reported to the Department of Industrial Relations. We believe that this number of reported needlesticks over a relatively short period of time is indicative of a real problem that does require a policy response.

In the 2013-14 legislative session, we jointly introduced two bills that would have significantly reduced the amount of home generated sharps illegally going into the general waste stream. Over the two year period that we worked on these measures, we heard from sanitation workers who were injured by illegally disposed sharps, local governments and waste processing facilities that are responsible for sorting and paying for the proper disposal of illegally disposed sharps, and sharps users who have few options for properly complying with existing law for home generated sharps disposal. Each of these groups provided compelling testimony that revealed a strong desire and need for policy changes to address the issues associated with illegal home-generated sharps disposal.

It has been illegal to dispose of home-generated sharps waste into the general waste stream for many years because the state recognizes that the presence of used sharps in home garbage

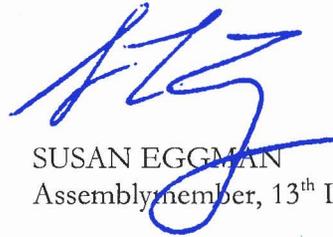


cans and trash sorting lines can endanger workers and the public. We remain committed to finding a solution to the problem of sharps being illegally disposed in the waste stream in order to help protect and reduce the burden on workers, local governments, ratepayers, home-generated sharps users and the public.

Sincerely,



MARK STONE
Assemblymember, 29th District



SUSAN EGGMAN
Assemblymember, 13th District