



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 16, 2007

CONTACT: Roger Conlee 619/795-7785
Julie Walke 858/729-9933

METRO JPA BACKS PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE-BACK BILL

The San Diego Metropolitan Joint Powers Authority (JPA) has voted to support Senate Bill 966, which would require pharmacies to collect and dispose of prescription drugs returned by their customers.

Safe disposal of expired or unused pharmaceuticals is a major concern with health officials and clean-water advocates. Flushing down the toilet puts them in the wastewater system, where treatment technology cannot entirely eliminate them before they enter the ocean. Placing them in the trash sends them to landfills where they can leach into the groundwater.

The Metro JPA is a coalition of cities and agencies that use the City of San Diego's sewer system and pay for 33 percent of its operating and maintenance costs. Its commissioners voted unanimously last week to send a letter of support for the bill to State Sen. Joe Simitian (D-Palo Alto), co-author of the legislation.

Members of the Metro JPA are the cities of Coronado, Del Mar, El Cajon, Imperial Beach, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, National City and Poway, and the Padre Dam Municipal and Otay Water Districts. The County of San Diego represents the Lakeside/Alpine, Spring Valley and Winter Gardens Sanitation Districts on the JPA. Del Mar City Councilmember Henry Abarbanel is the JPA's chairman. "We urge the JPA's individual agencies to send their own letters of support as well," Abarbanel said.

If the drug take-back bill is enacted, it would take effect in July 2008.

More information about the Metro JPA can be found at www.metrojpa.org.

###