



Empowering Communities, Advocating Solutions.

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Expansion of Pharmaceutical Take-Back Program

CCE supports the inclusion of \$800,000 for expanding the existing Pharmaceutical Take-Back program for healthcare facilities in the FY 2014-2015 Environmental Protection Fund.

Pharmaceutical contamination in groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuaries, and bays is an emerging issue throughout New York. Flushing unwanted or unused medication has been the common disposal practice, despite the fact that sewage treatment plants, septic systems, and drinking water infrastructure were never designed to remove these contaminants. Pharmaceuticals enter wastewater from a variety of sources, including the flushing of unused medications. A nationwide study done in 1999 and 2000 by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) found low levels of drugs such as antibiotics, hormones, anticonvulsants, and steroids in 80% of the rivers and streams tested.

Unfortunately, there are limited options for the safe disposal of unused pharmaceuticals which then causes flushing the unwanted drugs to be a continued practice throughout healthcare facilities in New York State. However, one laudable example of safe disposal is offered and run by the NYS DEC. The DEC program is provided for healthcare facilities in the Croton Reservoir, a sub-watershed of the New York City drinking watershed. These facilities are provided an option to have unused pharmaceuticals picked up twice a year. This program is designed to complement the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency's (DEA) program that also picks up drugs twice a year, in April and October. **CCE is requesting that the State of New York expand its current program to include all of New York State. Expanding the DEC program, in combination with the DEA program, will provide critically needed quarterly safe disposal options for healthcare facilities.**

CCE has been meeting with healthcare facilities throughout NY State. These facilities are in need of a safe disposal program that supplements the DEA program. Expanding the pharmaceutical take-back program to include all of New York State will provide a necessary service to these facilities while serving as an important first step in the fight to keep pharmaceuticals out of New York's waters.

CCE SUPPORTS \$800,000 FOR HEALTHCARE FACILITY PHARMACEUTICAL TAKE-BACK PROGRAM IN THE FY2014-2015 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUND.

Citizens Campaign for the Environment is an 80,000 member non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to empower communities and advocate solutions that protect public health and the natural environment.

www.citizenscampaign.org

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