



North Carolina Pretreatment Consortium, Incorporated

March 23, 2009

Drug Enforcement Administration
Attention: DEA, Federal Register Representative/ODL
8701 Morrisette Drive
Springfield, VA 22152

Re: Docket No. DEA-316
Disposal of Controlled Substances by Persons Not Registered With the Drug
Enforcement Administration

Dear DEA, Federal Register Representative:

Enclosed for submittal and your review please find the North Carolina Pretreatment Consortium's comments regarding the Disposal of Controlled Substances by Persons Not Registered with the Drug Enforcement Administration Proposed Rulemaking - Docket Number DEA-316. These comments are collective responses of members of the North Carolina Pretreatment Consortium (NC-PC) which represent more than half of the North Carolina approved 121 Pretreatment Programs. The State's Pretreatment Programs cover 147 municipal wastewater treatment plants with a combined National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitted wastewater flow of over 900 million gallons per day. The NC-PC appreciates this opportunity to include comments and to answer questions located in the Federal Register – Volume 74, No. 12 – Wednesday, January 21, 2009 Proposed Rules – For Concerned Interest Groups questions 42 through 52.

Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs) are tasked with the collection and treatment of wastewater generated by residential, commercial, and industrial users within a municipal jurisdiction. Recently Pharmaceutical and Personal Care Products (PPCPs) have become a focal point with the detection of pharmaceuticals in our nation's water bodies and the potential of ecological harm. Contributions of PPCPs to the POTWs are known to occur through unmetabolized human excretions, human hygiene, commercial/industrial processes, and disposal of unused/outdated medications.

Treated wastewater effluent and bio-solids sludge are the two primary by-products of municipal wastewater treatment. Wastewater treatment technologies are typically not designed to treat or remove PPCPs. Little is known about the ultimate fate and form of PPCPs in the typical wastewater collection and treatment process. PPCPs may deposit in

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bio-solid sludges, pass through the treatment process, or may degrade in some degree within the process. The result of PPCP discharges into the municipal wastewater system may result in treated wastewater discharges or bio-solids that contain pharmaceuticals. Treated wastewater is typically discharged to receiving water bodies and bio-solids are applied to land surfaces.

The NC-PC appreciates this opportunity to state its opinion that disposal in municipal sewer systems should not be promoted or considered as a viable disposal option or practice when handling the disposal of controlled and uncontrolled pharmaceutical substances unless disposal is conducted via a properly designed, controlled, and monitored wastewater treatment facility.

Please find below response to questions 42 through 52 For Concerned Interest Groups:

42. What prompted you to get involved in the issue of drug disposal?

The North Carolina Pretreatment Consortium (NC-PC) is interested in the ultimate disposal fate of controlled and uncontrolled pharmaceuticals as it relates to Publicly Owned Treatment Works and wastewater collection and treatment

43. What is your group doing to address this issue?

The NC-PC is monitoring Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products (PPCPs) current events and relaying information to its members

44. What have been your successes?

The NC-PC is able to keep members informed of current PPCP issues as it relates to wastewater treatment and regulations

45. What challenges or difficulties have you encountered?

The number of parameters and analytical costs associated with the array of emerging PPCP pollutants poses a problem for the monitoring of pharmaceuticals in the wastewater treatment process and identifying elevated concentrations

46. If you accept medications for disposal, what records do you maintain, if any?

A survey of NC-PC members resulted in no members (POTWs) that accept medications for disposal in the wastewater collection and treatment system

47. If you accept medications for disposal, how do you store and secure these medications prior to disposal?

No members indicated they accept medications or pharmaceuticals for disposal

48. If you accept medications for disposal, do you differentiate between controlled substances and noncontrolled substances? If so, how? Not Applicable

49. What has been law enforcement's involvement in the disposal of these medications, if any? Unknown

50. What would you estimate to be the percentage, quantity, or other measurable unit of controlled substances as compared to non-controlled substances that your disposal programs received? Not Applicable

51. If you have a pharmaceutical disposal program in place, how is it funded? Not Applicable

52. There is concern that residue from pharmaceuticals is being found in drinking water. What is your understanding of the percentage of this problem that is due to ultimate users flushing their unused or unwanted medications?

The NC-PC understands that there is a percentage of medications and pharmaceuticals that are not metabolized by ultimate users and is excreted from the body into the wastewater treatment system. Non-metabolized human excretions are uncontrollable from a discharge perspective and would be expected from hygiene and human excretions. Unused or unwanted medication disposal in the wastewater collection and treatment system may be attributed in part to household

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and institutional setting disposal activities and convenience. Education and proper disposal opportunities for unused medications are needed to minimize the likelihood of disposal in the wastewater collection and treatment system. Manufacturing processes, off-spec products, collected medication disposal on a commercial or industrial level can be significant contributors to wastewater treatment systems.

If there are any questions regarding this comment submittal, please feel free to contact me at (336) 373-3285.

Sincerely,

Amy Varinoski,
2008 Chairman, North Carolina Pretreatment Consortium, Inc.

Cc: DEA Controlled Substances Enforcement Administration
Federal Register Comment Subcommittee:

JoEllen Gay, City of Wilson
Jason Manning, Greenville Utilities Commission
Donald Smith, Town of Cary