



the campaign for
environmentally
responsible
health care

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Submitted in OB / Office Waste Committee
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Deputy: PUBLIC

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February 11, 2013

Honorable Jose Huizar
Member of the City Council
City of Los Angeles
Los Angeles City Hall
200 N Spring Street Room 465
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Fax: 213-847-0680

Re: Exempting hospitals from the exclusive solid waste franchise program.

Dear Councilman Huizar:

The purpose of this letter is to strongly encourage you to exempt hospitals in the City of Los Angeles from the proposed Solid Waste Franchise Program. This issue will come before your Committee on February 20. Health Care without Harm is a broad international coalition of labor unions, environmental organizations, hospitals and health care systems, medical professionals, community and religious groups. Together with our partners, Health Care Without Harm shares a vision of a health care sector that promotes the health of both people and the environment.

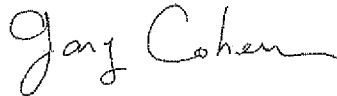
We are working to implement ecologically sound and healthy alternatives to the health care practices that pollute the environment and contribute to disease. That is why, while we support the City's goals to increase diversion and reduce pollution, we are opposed to including hospitals in the franchise program as it would have a detrimental impact on those worthy objectives. So on behalf of our members we strongly encourage an exemption or "carve out" of the City's hospitals from the exclusive franchise for the following reasons:

- *Health care waste management needs are unique* – the complexity of the waste, the regulations in place and the need for rigid pick-up schedules, make for special considerations requiring a strong relationship with a business partner that can both understand the complexities of the waste content AND the need for pick-ups within rigid, specified times.
- *Hospitals are looking to integrated solutions* where one vendor can manage the variety of materials and take on prevention and reduction initiatives that address "all" waste and not one waste stream alone.
- *Most hospitals are part of a larger health system* that can benefit from bidding out their contracts as a system and choosing the business partners that can not only reduce their costs but help them achieve their environmental goals.

- *Some hospital waste can be perceived as infectious* (i.e. betadine soaked gauze, which appears as blood), and this can result in confusion, negative press and other issues that would not occur with the care that is realized with a chosen vendor who has the necessary background and expertise.

I hope that you will support exempting hospitals from the Waste Franchise Program for the reasons I've outlined above. This will further the City's goals of increasing waste diversion and environmental benefits without compromising them in any way. Thank you for your consideration. Should you like to discuss this issue further, please contact Janet Brown, Director, Content and Outreach, Healthier Hospitals Initiative at jbrown@healthierhospitals.org.

Sincerely,



Gary Cohen
Founder, Health Care Without Harm

Cc: Honorable Herb Wesson, President
Los Angeles City Council

Capri Maddox, Acting President
Board of Public Works