



## City of Madison **Commission on the Environment**

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City-County Building, Room 115  
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Lori Grant, Chair

September 12, 2011

Dear City of Madison Alders,

There is an increasing awareness, both locally and nationally, of the danger of improperly disposing of old pharmaceuticals and other personal care products. Research has shown that traces of these drugs are found in our treated effluent, and can cause changes and deformities in amphibious animals. Thus far there has been no indication that humans are at risk locally, given the relatively low levels of substances found in our water, but the Committee on the Environment is committed to the health of the environment, which we feel is at risk by these potentially toxic substances.

While there is ongoing research to evaluate which drugs are or are not removed through standard municipal wastewater treatment, the best way to minimize this problem continues to be prevention. Members of the Committee on the Environment feel that MedDrop drop-off sites, where people can bring their old prescriptions and similar products to be disposed of more properly, should be available in more locations. Currently there is only one site within the City of Madison, at the East Side Police Station, that is available Monday through Friday during regular business hours.

Safe Communities, a non-profit that oversees the program, is seeking to expand the program by placing another drop site at another Police Station (either West or South) this year, and a third next spring. The sites need to be located inside police stations, per federal regulations. The goal is to eventually have 8-10 drop sites throughout Dane County.

The program is currently operating under a Dane County grant. In order to maximize the grant money, the Safe Communities group is asking each participating municipality to contribute matching funds to help with disposal costs. The material is hauled to an incinerator in Sauget, Illinois, and it requires a police escort for the duration of the 8-hour trip. The annual disposal cost per box is approximately \$3000; Safe Communities is asking for a \$1000 contribution per site per year from municipalities.

The Committee on the Environment strongly believes this is a program worth funding, and hopes that Common Council members see fit to support this minor expenditure.

Sincerely,

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Lori Grant  
Chair, Committee on the Environment