

February 20, 2008

Dear Wisconsin Law Enforcement Officials:

I have some good news to share with you today. Over the next three months, Wisconsin will be doing something that few states have done: sponsor a statewide grant program for the collection of unwanted drugs, including controlled substances. This work will be happening through the Wisconsin Clean Sweep Program and I would like to describe our plans to you.

In early March, we will notify local units of government that they are eligible to apply for grants of up to \$10,000 for the collection of unwanted drugs. Applications will be due by late March and awards made in April. Clean Sweep funded collections can take place between July 1st and December 31st. Here is where things get complicated.

The Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) made an early determination that pharmaceuticals, including controlled substances must be collected at all grant sites. The public doesn't know the difference between various drugs, and the fact that some are subject to illicit sale and abuse or that some can do serious environmental damage if disposed improperly. We had hoped a new collection method would be approved for our program that would not tie up valuable and stretched law enforcement resources, but that has not happened yet. So, we must be prepared to use the old tried and true method of law enforcement witnessed burning.

Your interest and participation in helping local governments collect controlled substances will be key to the success of this grant program. While your agency could be a collection site under terms of the grant, we anticipate that most law enforcement agencies would prefer to take controlled substances collected elsewhere to secure evidence/property storage until being transported for witnessed burning at approved thermal facilities/incinerators.

We recognize the burden this places on law enforcement and we have decided to make provisions for local governments to be reimbursed for the cost of law enforcement travel to approved facilities in the Upper Midwest. The Barron County incinerator is no longer available for this work. Reimbursement would be available for a team consisting of two law enforcement personnel plus related travel costs.

Because the cost of each witness burn is so high (up to \$3,000) and our budget so limited, witnessed burning costs would quickly consume much of our available funds if we didn't promote cooperative, regional approaches. Hence, if a single law enforcement agency within a region or area could offer witness burning services to several neighboring communities sponsoring drug collections, all local government applications would be given a much higher priority. The more local governments involved; the higher the priority in the grant review process.

We hope you are intrigued by this opportunity to help your community dispose of unwanted drugs in a safe and environmentally responsible manner; and we also hope you will consider becoming involved in a cooperative, witness burn program. If you have questions about the proposed program, do not hesitate to give me a call at 608-224-4545. In the meantime, your local health, solid waste/recycling, and land conservation departments will soon get word about this new grant opportunity and you may want to visit with them on your interest in helping out. Thank you for your attention on this matter. Roger Springman; Manager, Wisconsin Clean Sweep Program.