



# CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY NEWS RELEASE

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## Department of Toxic Substances Control

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### **State commends UC as 1<sup>st</sup> educational Take-It-Back Partner in California**

OAKLAND – Citing the need to expand recycling universal wastes to California’s educational institutions, Leonard Robinson, Chief Deputy Director for the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), today commended the University of California Office of the President (UCOP) for volunteering to establish an employee take-back program for used batteries, cell phones, and mercury thermometers as part of the California Take-It-Back Partnership. UCOP is the first educational institution in the state to become a partner in the California Take-It-Back Partnership, demonstrating their commitment to environmental stewardship.

UCOP will initially be collecting the items at free-standing donation centers that will be located at their headquarters in Oakland, as well as four satellite offices throughout the state.

“We are pleased to have the University of California on board, and it is our hope that more educational institutions - state colleges and community colleges - in our state come forward to assist in this environmentally friendly effort,” Robinson said. “Existing partners include corporations, retail stores and outlets, independent mom and pop store owners, non-profit organizations and municipal and county governments. All the partners have volunteered and are committed to providing California consumers with free and convenient locations to take back fluorescent lamps, batteries and electronic devices,” Robinson added.

“From large chain stores like Ikea, to non-profit groups like the Goodwill of the County of San Diego, these entities care about environmental stewardship and are demonstrating their commitment by participating in the California Take-It-Back Partnership, Robinson added.

The California Take-It-Back Partnership works with local governments, municipalities, educational institutions and non-profit groups, to provide a convenient and safe way for the public to dispose of “universal wastes,” commonly used items that when thrown in the landfills can harm the environment and have a negative impact on public health.

“The University of California is pleased to take part in this model effort to better safeguard the environment,” said Grace Crickette, University of California Chief Risk Officer. “As a public research university, we have an obligation to help create positive impacts on the environment. The California Take-it-Back Partnership Program is a wonderful ally in this environmental stewardship initiative, and we look forward to a long and exemplary collaboration.”

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New laws adopted since 2000 created California's "Universal Waste Rule" which simplified the way common household items would be managed as "hazardous waste." When the laws were originally adopted, a four year exemption was included for households and small business to provide for the development of an infrastructure by local governments (Household Hazardous Waste Collection) and recyclers. Although an infrastructure exists, it is not well known and is not coordinated – therefore collection and recycling efforts could differ by region and county.

The California Take-It-Back Partnership has three main goals:

- To coordinate participation of major retail corporations and assist in establishing and maintaining consumer "take back" programs for batteries, fluorescent lamps and electronic devices
- To work with local municipalities and retail outlets to provide California consumers with convenient venues for recycling of these materials
- To provide local governments and retail outlets with a statewide public awareness, information and identification program

Participating retail stores, non-profits, corporations, and educational institutions have pledged to provide collection services at various locations throughout the state. Independent retailers, county and local governments who have already started their own universal waste recycling programs are also part of the California Take-it-Back Partnership.

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***The Department of Toxic Substances Control is a department of the California Environmental Protection Agency. DTSC's mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the environment and ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.***