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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

SENATE RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THE RHODE ISLAND RESOURCE RECOVERY CORPORATION TO PLAN AND CARRY OUT A PILOT PROGRAM FOR THE SAFE REMOVAL OF SHARPS

Introduced By: Senator William A. Walaska

Date Introduced: February 27, 2014

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

1 WHEREAS, Rhode Islanders with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, allergies,
2 and arthritis rely on needles, syringes, and lancets – collectively known as "sharps" – to help
3 manage their health at home. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, more than three
4 billion disposable needles and syringes and 900 million lancets each year are used at home in the
5 United States; and

6 WHEREAS, Although many people take appropriate precautions when they dispose of
7 the sharps they have used in their homes, too often these devices end up included in household
8 trash or recycling bins, which can put others at risk through needle pricks and exposure to
9 infections; and

10 WHEREAS, A number of states have put into place programs that allow home users to
11 safely dispose of sharps. Hazardous waste sites, residential pick-up programs, neighborhood drop
12 boxes, and mail-back programs all represent effective approaches to the disposal of sharps that
13 are used in homes; and

14 WHEREAS, In Rhode Island, the state Department of Environmental Management and
15 the Department of Health have recognized the growing need to inform the public about safe ways
16 to dispose of sharps. Working together, these state agencies have created a guide for the safe
17 disposal of home-generated medical waste; and

18 WHEREAS, Rhode Island has an opportunity to build on the experiences of other states
19 and the outstanding efforts of our state agencies, by exploring a coordinated approach to safe

1 sharps disposal; and

2 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Resource Recovery Commission (RIRRC) is responsible
3 for managing the Ocean State's solid waste and recyclables. Staffed by a cadre of landfill
4 management and recycling professionals, RIRRC is a natural starting point in the state's efforts to
5 increase public safety through an environmentally safe sharps disposal program; now, therefore
6 be it

7 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
8 hereby respectfully requests that RIRRC plan and carry out a pilot program that will allow home
9 users of sharps to safely dispose of these devices; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby respectfully requests that RIRRC begins the pilot
11 safe sharps disposal program on or before July 1, 2014. RIRRC is asked to monitor the use of the
12 program and provide a written report to the Senate on or before January 1, 2016, that documents
13 the program's design and operation and provides recommendations for funding and further
14 improvement; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
16 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Governor, the Executive Director of the
17 Rhode Island Resource Recovery Commission, the Director of the Rhode Island Department of
18 Environmental Management, and the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Health.

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