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June 4, 2025

The Honorable Catherine Blakespear
California Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 7720
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 561 (Blakespear): Hazardous Waste: Emergency Distress Flare Safe Disposal Act – SUPPORT *(As Amended April 7, 2025)*

Dear Senator Blakespear:

Larry Klein
Mayor

Linda Sell
Vice Mayor

Alysa Cisneros
Councilmember

Richard Mehlinger
Councilmember

Murali Srinivasan
Councilmember

Charlsie Chang
Councilmember

Eileen Le
Councilmember

On behalf of the City of Sunnyvale, we want to express our support for SB 561, which would create a producer responsibility program for end-of-life management of emergency distress flares. Senate Bill 561 requires manufacturers to create, fund, and implement a producer responsibility program for the end-of-life management of expired emergency distress flares.

Flares are important safety and emergency devices. The U.S. Coast Guard requires visual distress signals be carried on recreational boats and many opt for marine flares to meet this requirement. While flares are vital safety devices, they generally have expiration dates of less than four years and must be managed as explosive hazardous wastes. While flares can cost consumers from \$13-\$26 each, they generally cost local governments \$46 or more per flare for disposal.

Local governments are responsible for the collection, processing, recycling and disposal of solid waste, including the operation of local household hazardous waste collection programs. These local programs provide important public services and prevent improper disposal of hazardous wastes. Our local programs often offer residents free drop off of HHW; however, the costs to manage some of the waste streams are shocking and put serious financial pressure on the programs and local governments that operate them. Many products, including flares, are far more expensive to manage at the end-of-life than it cost consumers to purchase the product at the point-of-sale. Rather than forcing local governments (and taxpayers) to shoulder those costs, SB 561 appropriately requires the manufacturers who introduce those goods into the stream of commerce to take charge of the collection, transportation, and

management of their expired flares. We believe that SB 561 will create clearer and more convenient disposal opportunities for consumers to safely dispose of expired emergency distress flares. It will also increase convenience for consumer disposal of flares while reducing costs for local household hazardous waste programs.

The City of Sunnyvale has long worked at tackling waste, including marine waste that can affect our water quality. Accordingly, this bill will assist us in meeting our city policy: EM-4 Adequate Water Quality and Council Policy 3.2.4 Zero Waste.

For these reasons, we support SB 561. Thank you for consideration of our position. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Ramana Chinnakotla, Director of Environmental Services, at rchinnakotla@sunnyvale.ca.gov, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Larry Klein
Mayor

cc: Senator Dr. Aisha Wahab
Assembly Member Patrick Ahrens
City Council
Tim Kirby, City Manager
Sarah Johnson-Rios, Assistant City Manager
Ramana Chinnakotla, Director of Environmental Services