



March 24, 2022

TO: Producers of Wipes Products

RE: Request for Proper Labeling of Wet Wipes and Ensuring Dispersibility

Dear Producers of Wipes Products:

On behalf of the listed organizations, we are writing to request that the wet wipes producers stop selling wipes that are improperly labeled as “flushable”, and to not sell any products that do not meet the dispersibility requirements as set forth in the 2020 [International Water Services Flushability Group \(IWSFG\) standard](#) for flushability. Manufacturers have been labeling their wet wipes and other products as “flushable” when many do not meet even the industry standards of “dispersability”. The labels are not truthful, and consumers are being deliberately misled to buy products thinking they are dispersible and safe to flush.

North American businesses and households spent an estimated \$2.5 billion on personal wipes in 2019. For over a decade, wipes have been one of the leading causes of residential and public sewer system clogs, spills, and equipment problems. The [National Association of Clean Water Agencies \(NACWA\) estimates that wipes result in about \\$441 million a year in additional operating costs in the collection systems of US clean water utilities](#). These clogs also result in environmental damages when sewers overflow and when wipes shed plastic microfibers, causing microplastic particles to appear in wastewater effluent.

We are very appreciative that the Association of the Nonwoven Fabrics Industry joined with the California Association of Sanitation Agencies and the National Stewardship Action Council to pass AB 818 (Bloom) in 2021 to address the labeling of non-flushable wipes products in California, but we need national solutions, and quickly. California and Washington now require packaging for these wipes to include the words “DO NOT FLUSH” and an accompanying moniker. California’s new law also includes a public education and outreach requirement. Additionally, Congressmembers Lowenthal and McClain introduced the bipartisan [HR 4602: The](#)

[Wastewater Infrastructure Pollution Prevention and Environmental Safety \(WIPPES\) Act](#) in July 2021 to make these labeling requirements a national standard. On February 3, 2022, Congressmembers Lowenthal and McClain introduced the [Protecting Infrastructure and Promoting Environmental Stewardship \(PIPES\) Act](#), which would require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to establish standards for the flushability of disposable wipes and would impose civil penalties on companies who are knowingly in compliance with these standards. The PIPES Act would help protect critical underground infrastructure, the environment, and waterways.

Therefore, the signers of this letter request that you do the following:

- 1) Support and help pass HR 4602: The WIPPES Act and the sister bill, HR6591: The PIPES Act;
- 2) Change the labels on such products sold in the United States to meet the new standards in California’s AB 818 as quickly as possible; and,
- 3) Never again put a product on the market in the United States labeled as “flushable” without meeting the IWSFG standard for “dispersibility”.

These are reasonable requests in response to the many years of problems and extra costs these wipes have caused homeowners and sanitation systems nationally. We look forward to working with you in the future to prevent products from entering the market prior to ensuring they are properly designed and labeled for their intended use.

Sincerely,

Heidi Sanborn
National Stewardship Action Council

Lisa Malek-Zadeh
West County Wastewater

Judith Enck, President
Beyond Plastics

Shell Cleave, Founder
Sea Hugger

Jan Dell, Independent Engineer
The Last Beach Cleanup

Cheryl Auger, President
Ban SUP

Jackie Nuñez, Founder
The Last Plastic Straw

Elizabeth Cute, Sr. Community Engagement
Manager
Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper

Joanie Steinhaus, Gulf Program Director
Turtle Island Restoration Network

Lynn Thorp, National Campaigns Director
Clean Water Action

Mia Davis, VP, Sustainability & Impact
Credo

Nicole Kurian, Policy Analyst
Californians Against Waste

Roger S. Bailey, General Manager
Central Contra Costa Sanitary District

David Diaz, Executive Director
Active San Gabriel Valley

Ruben Hernandez, Government Affairs
Representative
Marin Sanitary Service

Andrew Fisk, Executive Director
Connecticut River Conservancy

Bente Cooney, Founder
Plastic Free QAC

Pheng Lor, Education & Engagement
Program Manager
Ecology Center

Sven Edlund, Environmental Programs
Coordinator
City of San Mateo

Vince De Lange, General Manager
Delta Diablo

Joe Neugebauer, Vice-Chair
Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group

Jessica Mangual, Executive Assistant
Silicon Valley Clean Water

Sofia Ratcovich, CEO
Zero Waste Company

Muhammad Moazzam Khan,
Retired Scientist

Rick Galliher, President
Virginia Bottle Bill Organization

Holly Kaufman, President
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Andrea Kimmich, Founder
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Angela Howe, Legal Director
Surfrider Foundation

Diane Landry, Director
Bainbridge Island Zero Waste

Jason Dow, General Manager
Central Marin Sanitation Agency

Thomas Sgroi, President
Connecticut Association of Water Pollution
Control Authorities

Jeff LeMay, President
Connecticut Water Pollution Abatement
Association

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District

Amanda Flesse, Wastewater System
Manager
City of Santa Barbara

Rebecca Malpass, Policy & Research
Coordinator
The Water Collaborative of Greater New
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Sally Jane Gellert, Member
Occupy Bergen County, N.J.

Beth K. Stewart, Executive Director
Cahaba River Society

Liz Kirkwood, Executive Director
For the Love of Water (FLOW)

Lilia Corona, District Manager
Mt. View Sanitary District