



August 20, 2021

SENT VIA: EMAIL

Congressman Mike Thompson
2300 County Center Dr. Suite A100
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
crozer.connor@mail.house.gov

MEMBER AGENCIES

- City of Cloverdale
- City of Cotati
- City of Healdsburg
- City of Santa Rosa
- City of Sebastopol
- City of Ukiah
- County of Mendocino
- County of Sonoma
- Sonoma County Water Agency
- Town of Windsor

ANDY RODGERS
Executive Director

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(707) 508-3670

info@rrwatershed.org
www.rrwatershed.org

SUBJECT: Support for WIPPES Act (HR 4602)

Dear Congressman Thompson:

On behalf of the Russian River Watershed Association (RRWA), I write to express strong support for your Wastewater Infrastructure Pollution Prevention and Environmental Safety (WIPPES) Act. This bipartisan legislation takes a critical step to address the pervasive, but ultimately preventable, problem of the flushing of non-flushable wet wipes that cause undue adverse impacts to clean water infrastructure across the nation.

RRWA formed in 2003 and is a coalition of 10 cities, counties, and agencies within the 1,485 square mile Russian River watershed that work together for clean water, habitat restoration, and watershed enhancement. We urge that the WIPPES Act be included in any larger infrastructure investment package Congress acts upon this year.

Many of our members are responsible for collecting and treating communities' wastewater and have firsthand knowledge of the unique treatment and management challenges and pollution threats to our water supplies. This includes the flushing of non-flushable wet wipes. Often times, these wipes are marketed as flushable. However, frequently these products are composed of synthetic, plastic materials that are not compatible with the sewer systems and infrastructure. As a result, when these products travel through the sewer systems they do not break down, but rather accumulate with fats, oils and grease and become large obstructions in the pipes that ultimately clog pumps, collection systems, and motors, causing backups and treatment equipment failures. If the wipes manage to make it to the treatment facilities, the products are broken down into smaller microfibers and microplastics that can be inadvertently released back into the environment.

This legislation would address this unique problem in a straightforward and reasonable approach, by establishing "Do Not Flush" labeling requirements for non-flushable wet wipes product packaging. Such labeling requirements establishes a source control solution by stopping the use of flushing these wipes down the toilet as an acceptable disposal method and, as a result, decrease the strains that the flushing of these products have upon property owners, infrastructure, ratepayers, and the surrounding environment.

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Thank you for your continued efforts to address and develop solutions to the unique problems of the flushing of non-flushable wipes and including the clean water sector in the legislation. If RRWA can be a resource for you in the future, please do not hesitate to contact me at cleanwater@rrwatershed.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of fluid, connected strokes that form a stylized, somewhat abstract shape.

Andy Rodgers, RRWA Executive Director