



February 8, 2021

Clackamas County Board of Commissioners
Policy Position
HB 2344: Related to labeling requirements for wipes

Clackamas County supports HB 2344: The Board of County Commissioners supports legislation that improves the packaging and labeling of cleaning cloths referred to as “wipes” in order to reduce such products from being flushed, thus preventing needless repairs caused by these materials that do not dissolve in septic and wastewater systems.

The advent of “flushable wipes” has caused a huge amount of difficulty for the wastewater industry. While wipes do indeed flush down a toilet they do not dissolve or break down in the waste stream like traditional toilet paper. In fact, flushable wipes can often maintain their integrity upwards of 3 years after entering a wastewater system, disrupting the flow of pipes and causing extensive damage to public infrastructure that is expensive to repair.

This lack of dissolution causes several problems in the collection system. Namely, wipes do not move well within pipes and can cause clogs, sometimes in service laterals running from the house to the public infrastructure in the street, causing sewer backups into homes. The main impact on utilities is when wipes travel through the larger collection system to pump stations, where utilities use pumps to overcome gravity and direct flows to the wastewater treatment plants. Having not dissolved, wipes often get caught in the pumps, especially when they clump together to form “rag balls” that choke out the pump and cause it to fail and can result in a sanitary sewer overflow.

Improved packaging that identifies the negative implications of “flushable wipes” or removes the language altogether will reduce these failure on home and public systems, saving money for both home owners and rate payers.

We urge a “YES” vote on HB 2344.

Please contact Chris Lyons at clyons@clackamas.us for more information.