



PUBLIC WORKS – ENGINEERING

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May 11, 2021

Senator Lee Beyer, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
900 Court Street NE, HR B
Salem, Oregon 97301

Support of HB 2344-A

Dear Chair Beyer, Vice-Chair Findley, and Members of the Committee:

As the wastewater service provider to our community, the City of Albany strongly supports and urges your YES vote on HB 2344-A.

HB 2344-A would require manufacturers or retailers to place “Do Not Flush” labels and warning statements in visible locations on packages containing most types of wet wipes such as, baby wipes, cleaning wipes, and other personal care wipes. These products are often flushed down the toilet after use; however, they do not readily break down in the sewer system like toilet paper is designed to do. Wipes can accumulate in the sewer system, causing blockages, costly damage to pumps and wastewater treatment equipment, and sanitary sewer backups and overflows that create a public health hazard. Additionally, our staff must manually remove blockages from equipment, which increases hazardous conditions for our workers, and adds labor and equipment costs to the City. Labeling these disposable wipe products with “Do Not Flush” would require manufacturers to adhere to a statewide labeling standard that would clearly indicate that these wipes should not be flushed, which would help reduce their impact on the sewer system.

The City of Albany, and other wastewater organizations throughout Oregon, have worked hard to educate the public about the problems created when disposable wipes are flushed. Unfortunately, these efforts have not been successful in noticeably reducing volumes of wipes in the sewer system, and the increased use of wipes during the COVID-19 pandemic has made the situation worse. Clear information on wipe product packaging telling consumers “Do Not Flush” is needed now.

Albany joins with other Oregon municipalities and agencies, the Oregon Association of Clean Water, and League of Oregon Cities, and urges you to support HB 2344-A.

Sincerely,

Chris Bailey
Public Works Director

CB:KFP:kb

c: Representative Shelly Boshart Davis (via email Rep.ShellyBoshartDavis@oregonlegislature.gov)
Tracy Rutten Rainey, League of Oregon Cities (via email trutten@orcities.org)
Susie Smith, Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies (via email smith@oracwa.org)