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May 11, 2021

Senator Lee Beyer, Chair  
Senate Energy & Environment Committee  
900 Court St. NE, HR B  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2344-A Relating to labelling requirements for wipes

Dear Senator Beyer and Members of the Committee,

The City of Corvallis strongly supports and urges you to vote yes on HB 2344-A.

We urge you to support HB 2344-A because sewer system clogs and damaged equipment throughout the U.S. have surged because of ever-increasing quantities of inappropriate materials, including wet wipes, being flushed in household and public toilets. While wastewater networks can convey solids such as human waste and small food scraps, the removal of wipes is uniquely challenging because they combine into “rag mats” and “ropes” and are impossible to untangle. Accumulation of these materials can cause sanitary sewer overflows, creating a public health hazard. Wastewater operators must use cutting tools and other heavy industrial tools to manually remove blockages and clogs from pumps, screens and other equipment. These efforts increase hazardous conditions for workers and add labor and equipment costs to municipalities.

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. This will effectively inform consumers of appropriate disposal of wet wipes after use. HB 2344-A is consistent with the INDA/EDANA Code of Practice 2nd edition (published 2018), which was agreed upon by both product manufacturers and wastewater services sector trade organizations.

Wastewater agencies across the state have worked hard to educate the public about the problems created when disposable wipes are flushed. COVID-19 has increased the use and disposal of wipes, which has made the situation worse. Local governments have invested significant resources to change the public’s behaviors, encouraging the public to dispose of wipes in the trash. Billing inserts, social media posts, radio and television outreach are all elements of a major outreach effort undertaken over the past year. Unfortunately, these efforts have not been successful in noticeably reducing volumes of flushed wipes in the sewer system. Clear information on wipes packaging informing consumers to “Do Not Flush” is needed now.

The City of Corvallis urges you to support HB 2344-A. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tom Hubbard  
Utilities Division Manager