

April 3, 2015

The Honorable Jessica Vega-Pederson, Chair
House Committee on Energy and the Environment
900 Court St. NE, H-285,
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: HB 3478

Dear Chair Pederson and Member of the Committee:

I am writing in support of House Bill 3478 – a bill that will provide the most effective control possible for preventing synthetic plastic microbeads from entering our public streams and rivers – elimination of the source.

The potential human health risk from microbeads used in toothpastes has already caused some major companies to work towards their removal in those products, but there may also be environmental risks caused by other microbead-containing products that may only indirectly affect humans.

The potential impacts of plastics in the environment are numerous and only partly understood. Research has shown that plastics can be endocrine disruptors, causing developmental and reproductive issues for aquatic life. In addition to negative impacts from the plastic itself, plastic particles provide an attachment site for heavy metals, legacy pesticides (e.g. DDT) and other contaminants, which can then be consumed by fish and the food sources they depend on. Many of these plastics and contaminants are then stored in fat and muscle tissue, which can make their way through the food chain.

While use of personal care products containing synthetic plastic microbeads may not seem to pose a direct threat to our streams and rivers, most wastewater treatment facilities were not designed to remove these pollutants during treatment. Developing methods to remove these during the treatment process could require costly plant upgrades. The most cost effective way to prevent these from entering the environment is to prevent them from ever entering the waste stream.

In a community and state that works hard to protect the environment for endangered fish and wildlife, as well as human health, eliminating any product that poses more of a threat than benefit is something worthy of your consideration to support. Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,



Torrey Lindbo
Water Sciences Program Manager
City of Gresham Department of Environmental Services