



April 7, 2015

House Committee on Energy and Environment
Representative Jessica Vega Pederson, Chair
State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Sent via e-mail to anastasia.mickelson@state.or.us
Re: HB 3478 – Microbeads

Chair Vega Pederson and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies (ACWA) is a private, not-for-profit professional organization of Oregon’s wastewater treatment and stormwater management agencies, along with associated professionals. Our 120+ statewide members range in size from Riddle to Portland. Our members are dedicated to protecting and enhancing Oregon’s water quality in a sustainable manner. Our members provide wastewater treatment and stormwater management services to 2.4 million Oregonians and serve 62% of Oregon’s homes and businesses.

Toxic pollutants such as microbeads harm Oregon’s rivers and streams. Wildlife mistake small pieces of plastic such as microbeads for food and consume them. Microbeads also have the potential for toxicity, due to chemical additives and additional pollutants that absorb on to the surface of the plastic. Substantial research in the Great Lakes region has demonstrated the prevalence of microbeads in the Great Lakes ecoregion and the damaging impacts on fish and wildlife.

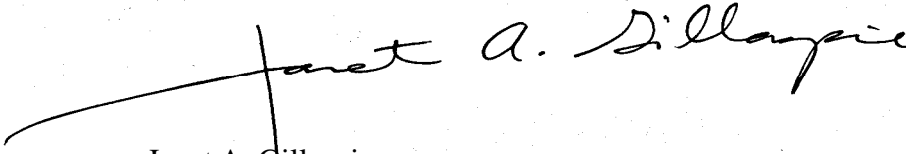
Oregon’s wastewater treatment plants are not designed to filter out extremely small particles such as microbeads. While no studies have been completed to confirm the presence of microbeads in our wastewater effluents, these contaminants are likely passing through our treatment plants and into Oregon’s rivers and streams.

Oregon ACWA, the League of Oregon Cities, and Special Districts Association of Oregon support HB 3478. One suggestion to ensure the bill is as clear as possible would be to amend the phrase ‘*is not biodegradable*’ (see Section 1, (1)(c)(B) to read “...*is not biodegradable in a natural aquatic environment*”. The term ‘*biodegradable*’ alone could be unclear.

Pollution prevention is the most effective, and cost effective, tool to reduce toxics in Oregon rivers and streams.

The voluntary efforts of some companies to replace plastic microbeads with natural products should be applauded and demonstrates the ability of the producers to adjust their products to meet environmental standards.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet A. Gillaspie". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Janet A. Gillaspie
Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies

Tracy Rutten

Tracy Rutten
League of Oregon Cities

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Landauer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Mark Landauer
Special Districts Association of Oregon