



Public Works Department

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May 10, 2021

Senator Lee Beyer, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
900 Court Street NE, S-201
Salem OR 97301

SUBJECT: HB 2344 Relating to Labeling Requirements for Wipes

The City of Salem strongly supports and urges you to vote yes on HB 2234. The City of Salem is the wastewater service provider to our community. The City of Salem provides wastewater services to an area that comprises more than 60 square miles, including the City of Salem, the City of Turner, and the City of Keizer.

We urge you to support HB 2344 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 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 2344A 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.

**Transportation and Utility
Operations**

1410 20th Street SE / Building 2
Salem OR 97302-1209
Phone 503-588-6063
Fax 503-588-6480

Parks Operations

1460 20th Street SE / Building 14
Salem OR 97302-1209
Phone 503-588-6336
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**Willow Lake Water Pollution
Control Facility**

5915 Windsor Island Road N
Keizer OR 97303-6179
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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, and 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 Salem urges you to support HB 2344. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter Fernandez", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Peter Fernandez, PE
Public Works Director
City of Salem

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cc: Heather Dimke, Management Analyst