



August 17, 2015

The Honorable Senator Mark Leno  
California State Senate  
Room 5100, State Capitol Building  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 888 (Bloom) - BAPPG Support for Plastic Microbeads Ban**

Dear Senator Leno:

The Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group (BAPPG) is pleased to support AB 888 (Bloom), which bans the sale of personal care products that contain plastic microbeads for the purpose of exfoliation in facial scrubs, soaps, and toothpaste. Our members, which include 43 wastewater treatment plants serving millions of Bay Area residents, are charged with safeguarding our receiving waters and have long embraced pollution prevention as a critical measure for wastewater quality control. Regionally, the BAPPG has an aggressive pollution prevention program that targets, among other things, chemical constituents of emerging concern such as pharmaceuticals and personal care products. These efforts have improved the performance of our wastewater treatment plants and protected the San Francisco Bay.

Our member agencies are tasked with ensuring water quality for our communities by collecting, treating and discharging wastewater to California's waters. Pollution prevention and source control are significant concerns for our committee, and plastic microbeads in particular are very difficult to filter out during the typical wastewater treatment processes. Even those microbeads that are labeled as "biodegradable" can have near term impacts on marine life. The BAPPG is concerned that microbeads are being flushed down drains as part of their intended use and can ultimately be discharged into California waterways and released into the environment.

There is some misinformation circulating that plastic microbeads can be removed or eradicated at the end of the line at all wastewater treatment plants. This is simply not correct. While some wastewater treatment plants utilize tertiary or other advanced levels of treatment that, in some cases are able to filter out plastic microbeads, others do not. Typically for those that do have more advanced levels of treatment, this filtration capability is an ancillary benefit of upgrading treatment plants to meet stringent waste discharge requirements, or where agencies are reclaiming the wastewater for recycling purposes. Upgrading all treatment plants to treat effluent to this level would be extremely costly, unnecessary, and create significant rate increases that would ultimately burden local ratepayers. Furthermore, the pollution caused by these materials can easily be substituted for natural alternatives or removed from the product chain at its source.

The BAPPG supports AB 888 as it provides for a simple source control solution that will benefit both local government and California residents as rate payers. There are already natural alternatives available to replace plastic microbeads in personal care products that have no

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negative environmental impacts. The best way to ensure that these pollutants are not discharged to California waterways is to prohibit their introduction to the wastewater stream on the front end.

For these reasons, BAPPG urges your support for this important bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert C. Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "W".

Robert C. Wilson  
BAPPG Chair

cc: Adam Link, CASA Director of Government Affairs [[alink@casaweb.org](mailto:alink@casaweb.org)]  
Jessica Gauger, CASA Lobbyist [[jgauger@mfdillon.com](mailto:jgauger@mfdillon.com)]