

July 6, 2020
The Honorable Ben Allen, Chair
Senate Environmental Quality Committee
State Capitol, Room 2205
Sacramento, CA 95814

Submitted Online via [CA Leg Advocacy Portal](#)

RE: AB 1672 (Bloom): Support

Dear Senator Allen:

The Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group is pleased to support AB 1672 (Bloom). Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (BACWA) members include 55 publicly owned wastewater treatment facilities and collection system agencies serving 7.1 million San Francisco Bay Area residents. We take our responsibilities for safeguarding receiving waters seriously. BAPPG, which is a committee of BACWA, focuses on outreach and education related to safeguarding receiving waters. We urge the committee to move AB 1672, a straightforward bill that will encourage pollution prevention through clear and consistent consumer information.

AB 1672 would establish labeling requirements for wet wipes packaging so that Californians will know how to properly dispose of these popular consumer products. In recent years, wet wipes have become widely available as they're designed for a variety of daily household purposes. Despite voluntary industry labeling guidelines, proper disposal information is inconsistent on wipes product labels, and some wipes are advertised as "flushable," which can lead to confusion about what products can be flushed down the toilet and which are instead intended for the trashcan. Because many wet wipes are made from plastic, they are not compatible with sewer systems and infrastructure. Improperly flushing these incredibly durable products results in their getting caught in pipes or accumulating with fats, oils, and grease and becoming larger obstructions that cause costly backups and sometimes result in raw sewage overflows. Further down the sewer line, wipes tend to weave together and create giant rags which get stuck in pump systems and motors and damage expensive public infrastructure. Additionally, environmental harm can come from flushing wipes since they shed microplastics into the wastewater system that can ultimately be discharged to the aquatic environment.

Member agencies of BACWA/BAPPG have had to deal with impacts from flushed wet wipes before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the last decade, wet wipes have been an increasing problem for property owners, sewer systems, and ratepayers. A recent national analysis indicates California wastewater agencies spend nearly \$50 million annually on operations and maintenance alone to manage this problem which could be much more easily and affordably managed if consumers knew to dispose of wipes in the trash instead. AB 1672 would ensure wet wipes packaging clearly communicates the appropriate disposal method for the products not intended to be flushed, and further requires wipes manufacturers to conduct education and outreach about the "Do Not Flush" symbol and label notice. This straightforward bill has been mutually agreed to by the wipes manufacturers and wastewater and product stewardship representatives. If enacted, it will establish the strongest wet wipe labeling requirements in the country.

For these reasons, the BAPPG is pleased to support AB 1672, and we respectfully request your support when the bill is heard in the Senate Environmental Quality Committee.



Sincerely,
Autumn Cleave
Co-Chair of Bay Area Pollution Prevention group

cc: Assembly Member Richard Bloom (Andrew.aldama@asm.ca.gov)
Jessica Gauger, California Association of Sanitation Agencies (jgauger@casaweb.org)

