



September 27, 2023

The Honorable Gus Bilirakis
Chairman
Subcommittee on Innovation, Data, and Commerce
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jan Schakowsky
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Innovation, Data, and Commerce
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Bilirakis and Ranking Member Schakowsky:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to express support for the *Wastewater Infrastructure Pollution Prevention and Environmental Safety (WIPPEs) Act* (H.R.2964) and respectfully request that this letter be included in the September 27, 2023 Subcommittee on Innovation, Data, and Commerce “Proposals to Enhance Product Safety and Transparency for Americans” legislative hearing’s record. This bipartisan legislation takes a straightforward and reasonable approach to addressing the pervasive, but ultimately preventable pollution problem stemming from the improper disposal of non-flushable wipes in the nation’s wastewater systems.

The WIPPEs Act provides a common sense “Do Not Flush” labeling requirement for non-flushable wipes packaging and establishes a simple source management solution through consistent on-package consumer education. The wipes industry, clean water sector, civil engineers, and environmental advocates support the WIPPEs Act. We believe the legislation will

advance our mutually shared interest to protect public infrastructure and the environment by promoting responsible disposal habits. Due to the lack of consistent and clear disposal packaging instructions, consumers often unwittingly flush these wipes down the toilet. At a national-level, wet wipes are responsible for \$441 million a year in additional operating costs at US clean water utilities.¹ Since these types of wipes are not designed to be flushed, they can clog and damage pipes, pumps, and treatment equipment, resulting in increased operation and maintenance costs for clean water utilities. Additionally, the flushing of these wipes can cause potential environmental harms, such as sewer overflow events, and some may contribute microplastic and microfiber pollution to our water resources.

The WIPPES Act takes a straightforward and reasonable approach to addressing this pervasive, but ultimately preventable pollution problem. This bipartisan legislation provides a common sense “Do Not Flush” labeling requirement for non-flushable wipes packaging that is based upon labeling actions taken by several states to address the issue. As a result, the WIPPES Act establishes a simple source management solution through consistent on-package consumer education.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments for the record and your leadership to develop common-sense and bipartisan solutions to the unique problems related to the flushing of non-flushable wipes.

Sincerely,

American Society of Civil Engineers
Association of Nonwoven Fabrics Industry
Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group
California Association of Sanitation Agencies
Consumer Healthcare Products Association
Kimberly-Clark
National Association of Clean Water Agencies
National Rural Water Association
National Stewardship Action Council
Procter & Gamble
Washington Association of Sewer & Water Districts
Water Environment Federation

¹ NACWA. 2020. The Cost of Wipes On America’s Clean Water Utilities: An Estimate of Increased Utility Operating Costs. https://www.nacwa.org/docs/default-source/resources---public/govaff-3-cost_of_wipes-1.pdf?sfvrsn=b535fe61_2#