



May 10, 2021

Senator Lee Beyer, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Support for HB 2344-Relating to labeling requirements for wipes

The City of Eugene strongly supports and urges you to vote yes on HB 2344. The City of Eugene owns and operates an extensive wastewater collection system and operates the Eugene/Springfield Water Pollution Control Facility which provides wastewater treatment for the cities of Eugene and Springfield, and portions of Lane County.

Wipes have been an issue for wastewater collection and treatment systems for many years, but utilities have seen a proliferation of these products in recent years. Wastewater collection system blockages 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. 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 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, 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.

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. Clear information on wipes packaging informing consumers to “Do Not Flush” is needed now.

The City of Eugene urges you to support HB 2344. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

submitted electronically

David Breitenstein
Wastewater Division Director