

AB 1672 (Bloom): Labeling Requirements for Single-Use Disposable Wipes

MYTHS & FACTS

MYTHS

MYTH: AB 1672 would ban the sale of flushable wipes in California.

MYTH: The standards set by AB 1672 are not scientifically based. The standards created by INDA/EDANA, the wipes' industry associations, are the ones that should be used to determine what is "flushable."

MYTH: Consumers need flushable wipes to meet their basic hygiene needs, especially those consumers with particular health issues or other special needs. AB 1672 would prevent them from using these products.

MYTH: There is a lack of data to show that sewage spills are caused by flushable wipes.

MYTH: Flushable wipes manufacturers are being blamed for a problem that they don't cause, which is really caused by consumer misbehavior. Education of the public is the solution.

MYTH: Clogs are really caused by Californians' conserving water, reducing the amount of water in sewer pipes – causing backups.

FACTS

FACT: AB 1672 would not ban the sale of any product. AB 1672 would do 2 things:

- 1) Require clear and accurate labeling of wipes so consumers can easily distinguish between "flushable" and "non-flushable" wipes, and
- 2) Set needed technical standards for use of the term "flushable" that will protect public infrastructure, prevent sewage spills and safeguard water quality.

FACT: The standards set by AB 1672 were created by an international group of technical experts with no conflict of interest to ensure that sewer systems, rivers, streams, and the ocean are protected. The standards created by INDA/EDANA are simply not strict enough to protect sewer systems and were created by the very companies that want to maximize the sale of wipes. They have an inherent conflict of interest and do not have the mission of protecting public health, environment or infrastructure. This contributes to sewer providers across the state, country, and internationally experiencing massive wipes clogs causing sewer system issues and overflows.

FACT: AB 1672 does not prevent any type of wipes from being sold for use in California. AB 1672 only addresses the issue of how a wipe should be disposed. Unless wipes meet strict technical standards necessary to be "flushable," they should be placed in the trashcan, not the toilet.

FACT: Sewage spills can have many different causes, and many spills are caused by multiple factors that occur together, such as presence of excess wipes, tree root intrusion, and accumulations of fat, oil and grease. In California, the Statewide Sanitary Sewer System Waste Discharge Requirements prohibits ALL sewage spills and requires that all spills be reported to the State. However, there is not currently an option to choose in the database for spills caused by single-use wipes. That is the reason that the State's database contains few spills that are attributable to wipes.


FACT: Public agencies have spent millions of dollars in public money installing screens and grinders to address wipes clogging their treatment plants, pumps, and pipes. Additionally, sanitation workers spend thousands of hours each year to clear and clean blockages in equipment.

FACT: We agree that public education is critically important. However, consumer confusion is caused by the fact that many wipes are labeled as "flushable," and more and more products are claiming to be safe to flush. The proliferation of flushable wipes in the marketplace and the growing market penetration of this product has resulted in the need for strict and objective technical standards. AB 1672 would address this need.

FACT: Sewer districts around the state have engaged in outreach for campaigns well over a decade. Yet the industry has done little outreach, and is opposing AB 1672, which requires the most basic of consumer education -- product labeling. Even with concerted public outreach by sewer agencies, wipes are still a problem. AB 1672 will provide enhanced public education to combat this problem.

FACT: Conserving water is the new standard for all Californians, which does reduce wastewater flows. This is all the more reason that items like wipes that don't break down quickly in the sewer system should not be flushed and should be put in the trash can instead.





WIPES CLOG PIPES



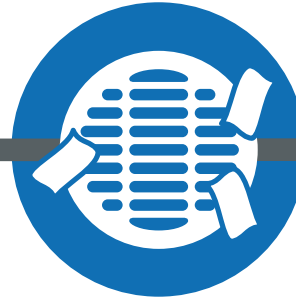
FLUSHED WIPES

Flushing wet wipes down the toilet can clog plumbing systems, leading to expensive repairs. Many people don't know that wipes shouldn't go in the toilet and pose a risk for sewer infrastructure.



CLOGGED SEWER LINES

Wipes make their way into private sewer laterals, septic systems, and sewer lines and can cause extensive harm and result in overflows and property damage.



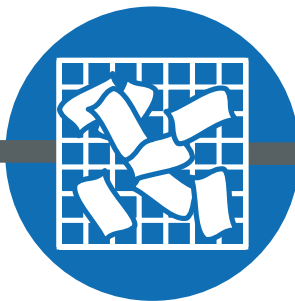
SEWER OVERFLOWS

Once wipes make it to the sewer collection system, they can catch on roots that infiltrate pipes, weave together to form large rags and attract fats, oils and grease. This can result in blockages and sewer spills.



ENVIRONMENTAL HARM

Even when wipes filter out of the wastewater stream, small microfibers and microplastics can shed off wipes. These fibers can't be captured and can make their way into the environment.



DISRUPTED TREATMENT PLANTS

Oftentimes, masses of wipes manage to make it through the collection system and end up at wastewater treatment plants, which can result in significant damage to treatment infrastructure and recurrent disruption of the treatment process.



DAMAGED COLLECTION SYSTEMS

Most collection systems rely on pumps to move wastewater to treatment facilities. Wipes can clog these pumps, resulting in spills, system failures, increased maintenance requirements and damage to expensive equipment.



CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION
OF SANITATION AGENCIES

casaweb.org/wipes