



# NATIONAL STEWARDSHIP ACTION COUNCIL<sup>SM</sup>

ADVOCATING FOR A CIRCULAR & EQUITABLE ECONOMY

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## Sanitation Districts and Environmental Groups Call on Wet Wipes Manufacturers to Take Responsibility

*It's time for a nationwide "Truth in Labeling" solution*

(Sacramento, CA) – Wastewater sanitation districts and environmental groups from across the nation are calling on all wet wipes manufacturers to end the destruction their products can cause because of false labels that imply these products can be flushed down the toilet. The coalition urges these manufacturers to never again put a product on the United States market labeled as “flushable” without meeting the International Water Services Flushability Group (IWSFG) standard for “dispersibility”.

Many wet wipes are primarily composed of synthetic plastic fibers such as polyester or polypropylene. Unfortunately, misleading and confusing labeling often implies consumers can dispose of these wipes by flushing them down the toilets without harm or negative consequences, which is untrue.

Improperly flushed wet wipes clog internal plumbing, septic systems, public sewer systems and wastewater treatment facilities. These clogs can damage sewer pipes and wastewater equipment, which is costly to local governments and ratepayers. Additionally, flushed wet wipes do not break down naturally; instead, they break into continuously smaller pieces called microplastics that can leach chemicals into agricultural soils and human drinking water supplies, can be eaten by wildlife, and can otherwise damage fragile ecosystems.

A national solution to this systemic problem is needed to keep these plastic products out of wastewater infrastructure, reduce costly clogs, and eliminate microplastic releases. To keep sanitation systems safe, wet wipes manufacturers must follow the stronger labeling guidelines that call for prominent positioning of “Do Not Flush” wording and imagery.

Outlined in a letter addressed to non-compliant companies, 44 organizations request non-compliant wet wipes manufacturers to do the following:

- 1) Support and help pass [HR 4602: The WIPPES Act](#) and the sister bill, [HR 6591: The PIPES Act](#);
- 2) Change the labels on such products sold in the United States to meet the new standards in California’s [AB 818](#) as quickly as possible; and,
- 3) Never again put a product on the market in the United States labeled as “flushable” without meeting the [IWSFG standard for “dispersibility”](#).

Signed into California law in October 2021, AB 818 (Bloom) requires premoistened nonwoven disposable wipes manufactured on or after July 1, 2022, to be labeled clearly and conspicuously with the phrase “Do Not Flush” and a related symbol to be enforced.

“After successfully changing the law in California, the [National Stewardship Action Council](#) (NSAC) decided that we need to solve this problem nationally,” said Heidi Sanborn, Executive Director of the NSAC.



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The passing of AB 818 (Bloom) resulted in the introduction of the bi-partisan bill HR 4602 (Lowenthal) The WIPPES ACT. Labeling plastic wipes as “flushable” has directly misled consumers to buy products thinking wet wipes are dispersible and safe to flush, causing costly clogs in sewer systems everywhere. The newly introduced HR 6591 (McClain) The PIPES Act would require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to establish standards for the flushability of disposable wipes and would impose civil penalties on companies who are knowingly noncompliant with these standards.

“West County Wastewater and the Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group (BAPPG), along with its 44-member agencies have been educating the community about the problems associated with wipes and other non-flushables for years. We have devoted ratepayer dollars to emergency responses related to sewer spills caused by masses of non-dispersible wipes clogging pipes and creating maintenance nightmares,” says Joe Neugebauer of West County Wastewater and BAPPG.

The National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) estimates that wipes result in about \$441 million a year in additional operating costs in the collection systems of US clean water utilities. This has led to the formation of organizations such as the Responsible Flushing Alliance in which the wipes supply chain works collaboratively with operating entities to understand the impact of flushed items on wastewater infrastructure. Supporting companies such as Dude Wipes, Procter & Gamble, and Kimberly-Clark have taken on the responsibility of ensuring their products are compliant with appropriate legislation.

Neugebauer ended with, “These products foul our pumps and other critical equipment, and it is time for manufacturers of wipes to do their part by following through on the requests in this letter. No consumer should be confused about how to dispose of any product, especially a single-use product that has severe consequences when disposed of improperly.”

This “Truth in Labeling” solution is a major step in removing improperly disposed wet wipes from our nation’s wastewater infrastructure.

## **About NSAC – [www.nsaction.us](http://www.nsaction.us)**

National Stewardship Action Council (NSAC) was founded in 2015 as a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization that engages in education and advocacy work that drives a circular and equitable economy, anywhere in the U.S., and at any level of government. Our vision is that the U.S. achieve a circular and equitable economy. You can follow us on social media via [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [You Tube](#).