



**NATIONAL
STEWARDSHIP
ACTION COUNCIL**

ADVOCATING FOR A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

1822 21st Street, Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95811
(916) 217-1109
nsaction.us

March 4, 2021

The Honorable Bill Quirk, Chair
Assembly Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 171
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: AB 818 (Bloom): Labeling of Wipes - Sponsor and Support

Dear Assembly Member Quirk:

The [National Stewardship Action Council](http://nsaction.us) is proud to co-sponsor AB 818 (Bloom), to reduce the cost to local governments to address clogs caused by “flushable” wipes and to reduce consumer confusion. This is a common-sense bill to address a problem that never should have been allowed – a producer of a product intentionally labelling a product flushable when it was not safe to flush thereby costing millions to local government budgets to clean-up sewer blockages.

The National Stewardship Action Council is a 501(c)(4) non-profit organization comprised of governments, non-government organizations, businesses, and consumers with the vision for the United States to attain a circular economy, an economic system aimed at eliminating waste and the continual use of resources.

Single-use wet wipes have been gaining popularity over the last decade nationwide and wipes have been one of the leading causes of residential and public sewer system backups and equipment problems for over a decade. The use of single-use wet wipes was further amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent consumer over-purchasing of toilet paper that resulted in shortages and led people to buy alternatives such as baby wipes, and then flush them. Wastewater operators and news outlets in California and across the country are reporting that wipes are clogging sewage systems. Agencies are reporting increases in maintenance intervals to unclog heavy and expensive equipment like pumps and lift stations, and to clear sewer lines with high powered jets. Wipes cost California wastewater operators at least \$50 million a year, also resulting in environmental damage when sewers overflow and when wipes shed plastic microfibers, releasing particles in wastewater effluent.

While some wipes are advertised as “flushable”, others have no disposal information on the packaging at all. The sale of both “flushable” and non-flushable wipes and the lack of proper labeling and public education leads to consumer confusion about which wipes can be flushed.

AB 818 requires non-flushable wipes to be clearly labeled with “DO NOT FLUSH” labeling and universal moniker to greatly reduce consumer confusion about what is safe to flush. The bill would also require the manufacturers of these products to conduct a comprehensive statewide consumer education and outreach campaign.

AB 818 is the result of negotiations between stakeholders and represents a consensus approach to a problem that has vexed California for years. For the reasons described above, NSAC strongly supports AB 818 and urges your AYE vote.

Sincerely,

Heidi Sanborn, Executive Director
National Stewardship Action Council