Protecting Against Microplastics Act

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The Problem

Microplastics never biodegrade. They are found worldwide — in rain, snow, soil, food, and throughout the human body.

Microplastics are plastic particles smaller than 5 millimeters (nanoplastics are even smaller). They are intentionally added to many everyday products.

Plastic contains over 16,000 chemicals; more than 4,200 are hazardous, yet fewer than 6% are regulated globally.

Microplastics can be inhaled or ingested through common products, despite safer alternatives already existing.

Certain communities, including women of color, may face higher exposure due to the abundance of chemicals added to certain products.



Exposure to plastics across their lifecycle has been linked to:
Neurological diseases, such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases
Birth defects • Hormone disruption
Cancer • Respiratory illness

Gaps in Current Law

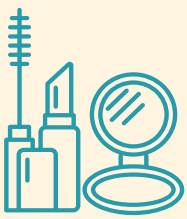
The Microbead-Free Waters Act (2015) addressed some concerns, but major gaps remain:

- Covers only **rinse-off cosmetics**
- Does NOT cover **leave-on products** (makeup, lotions)
- Limited coverage of toothpaste

Microplastics are still common in:

- 90% of mascaras
- 85% of lip products
- 74% of foundations
- 43% of powders

A single application can release up to 100,000 particles.



Hidden Sources

Microplastics are also found in toothpaste, "compostable" plastics, chewing gum, and tea bags (billions per use).

Wastewater systems cannot effectively filter microplastics, allowing contamination of water and ecosystems.

A single piece of chewing gum, both synthetic and "natural", can release over 3,000 microplastics into the saliva, 94% released in the first 8 minutes.



Products of Concern

Microplastics are commonly added to:

- Cosmetics & personal care products
- Cleaning products
- Toothpaste
- Chewing gum
- Tea bags
- Compostable "eco-friendly" foodware, bakeware and cookware



Common plastic ingredients include:

- Polyethylene (PE)
- Polypropylene (PP)
- PET
- Polystyrene (PS)
- Nylon (PA)
- Polyurethane (PU)
- Acrylates

These materials are used as fillers, binders, abrasives, or for texture and appearance. Conventional wastewater treatment plants do not capture a significant percentage of microplastics enabling microplastics to enter into drinking water or local waterways.

The Solution

1 Truth in Labeling

Clear labeling allows consumers to make informed choices.

2 Eliminate Microplastics

Phase out use in:

- Cosmetics & Personal care products
- Cleaning products
- Toothpaste
- Chewing gum
- Tea bags
- Foodware

3 Safer Alternatives

Replace microplastics with:

- Sugar, salt, coffee, oats
- Natural gum bases (chicle, mastic)
- Fruit seed powders (olive, apricot, raspberry)
- Pumice
- Nut shells (walnut, pistachio, almond, peanut, argan)

TAKE ACTION!

Support policies that require transparent labeling and eliminate unnecessary microplastics!

Ask your legislators to support Protecting Against Microplastics Act, S4836/A5452

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