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Title: CONSIDER APPROVAL OF TAKING A POSITION OF SUPPORT AND SENDING A LETTER FOR ASSEMBLY BILL 818 (BLOOM) RELATED TO SOLID WASTE: PRE-MOISTENED NONWOVEN DISPOSABLE WIPES (CITY COUNCIL)

Sponsors:

Indexes:

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Attachments: 1. Letter of Support for AB 818

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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Report to Mayor and City Council

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Consent

SUBJECT:

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF TAKING A POSITION OF SUPPORT AND SENDING A LETTER FOR ASSEMBLY BILL 818 (BLOOM) RELATED TO SOLID WASTE: PRE-MOISTENED NONWOVEN DISPOSABLE WIPES (CITY COUNCIL)

I. SUMMARY

This item transmits a recommendation from the Legislative Ad Hoc Committee (Mayor Davis-Holmes and Councilmember Hicks) for the City to support Assembly Bill 818, which is a reiteration of Assembly Bill 1672 that was previously supported by the City Council.

In 2019, the growing public hygiene issue concerning the disposal of single use wipes on sewer systems came to the attention of the City of Carson, through support action taken by the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts. The Sanitation Districts, at the time, urged cities within the districts to consider taking a support position on Assembly Bill (“AB”) 1672, which would have required clear labeling with the phrase “Do Not Flush” and a related symbol on pre-moistened nonwoven disposable wipes. AB 818, which is before the City Council tonight, continues this legislative effort as AB 1672 did not pass when it was considered by the State of California Senate Environmental Quality Committee in November of 2020. The City Council previously approved a letter of support for AB 1672 on May 7, 2019. Currently, the purpose of AB 818 is to mitigate the problems associated with

disposable wipes being flushed through the sewer system as this causes a large increase in maintenance costs related to unclogging the system.

Protecting public health, the environment, and public infrastructure is imperative and mitigating the improper flushing of pre-moistened nonwoven disposable wipes by consumers is a positive step that will bring about a statewide solution to combat this serious problem being faced by public sewage agencies.

In support of this continued effort, Assembly Member Richard Bloom introduced Assembly Bill 818, in February 2021. AB 818 enhances the original initiatives proposed by AB 1672 by establishing the California Consumer Education and Outreach program, which would require the manufacturers of non-flushable wet wipes to participate in a coordinated study with the California Association of Sanitation Agencies. The study is intended to bring more clarity to consumer behavior regarding the flushing of non-flushable wet wipes and how labeling with the phrase "Do Not Flush" and a related symbol will influence consumers.

The program will also conduct an opinion survey to identify consumer behavior and awareness regarding the flushing of disposal of wet wipes. AB 818 as written intends for these efforts to produce a comprehensive education and outreach program to promote consumer awareness and understanding of compliance with the labeling and symbol notice requirements.

Mayor Davis-Holmes is currently on the Board of the Sanitation District and concurs with the City of Carson supporting this item.

II. RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE the Letter of Support for AB 818 and DIRECT staff to distribute it to the appropriate committees, Senate Environmental Quality Committee and legislators.

III. ALTERNATIVES

TAKE another action deemed appropriate by the City Council.

IV. BACKGROUND

The proposed legislation, AB 818, would require certain pre-moistened nonwoven disposable wipes manufactured on or after July 1, 2022, to have a clear and conspicuous label with the phrase "Do Not Flush" and a related symbol. Due consumers often mistakenly using the wastewater system as a preferred means of disposal, measuring the effectiveness of the consumer education and outreach program is a priority of the State Water Resources Control Board.

If the Bill is adopted, manufacturers would no longer be allowed to represent their products as having flushable attributes. Additionally, AB 818, until January 1, 2017, would establish the California Consumer Education and Outreach Program, which would require manufacturers and retailers to participate in a collection study conducted in cooperation

with wastewater agencies, to gain further understanding of current consumer behaviors, such as, flushing pre-moistened nonwoven disposable wipes into the public sewage infrastructure. A comprehensive multimedia education and outreach program will also follow the study and is intended to be distributed throughout the state. Reports of the findings are to be filed with the Legislature and the State Water Resources Control Board and would also require the State Water Resources Control Board to post the reports on its internet website.

Staff recommends the City Council support the proposed legislation because AB 818 would help to ensure improved consumer behaviors regarding the disposal of personal hygiene/cleaning products, specifically pre-moistened nonwoven disposable wipes.

V. FISCAL IMPACT

None

VI. EXHIBITS

1. Letter of Support for AB 818 (pgs. 4 - 5)

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