



Wisconsin becomes seventh state to tackle microplastic pollution.

MADISON — Several months after unanimously passing through the Wisconsin State Legislature, Gov. Scott Walker signed the microbeads bill into law today, ushering in new protections to keep microplastics out of Wisconsin's waters and our cherished Great Lakes.

"We're elated to finally have the microbeads bill signed into law," says Amber Meyer Smith, director of government relations of Clean Wisconsin, the largest state-based environmental organization in Wisconsin. "This is the kind of bipartisan legislation we need to ensure our environment remains clean now and for generations to come, and we'd like to thank the authors for their attention on this topic."



Introduced by Sen. **Rob Cowles** and Rep. **Mary Czaja** in January, Wisconsin's law will phase out the manufacture and sale of personal care products containing microbeads, small pieces of plastic added to products like body scrubs and toothpastes. These tiny particles end up in our waterways where they can threaten ecosystem health and human health.

Wisconsin is the seventh state to sign a microbeads bill into law; Illinois, Maine, New Jersey, Colorado, Indiana and Maryland have already enacted microbead laws. Several other states are considering microbead bans, and federal legislation has also been introduced.

"It's great to see Wisconsin ahead of the curve on this issue," says Smith. "Given the potential danger microbeads represent, and the cost-effective replacements for these plastic particles, it's crucial we do all we can to get these microbeads out of our products and our waters."

Microbeads Law Now on the Books

Written by Clean Wisconsin

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More than an estimated 10,000 pounds of microbeads are washed down Wisconsin drains each year. Due to their small size, microbeads can move through water treatment systems and into our waterways. Once there, the microbeads continue to accumulate as they don't easily break down in the environment. In addition, these plastic particles can find their way into the fish we catch and accumulate in greater amounts as large fish eat smaller fish, a process called biomagnification. Wisconsin's law bans the manufacture of microbeads for many products by 2018 and gets those products containing microbeads out of retail stock by 2019.

"Clean Wisconsin is proud to be part of this important movement," says Smith. "Reducing microplastic pollution in our waterways not only protects our beloved waters, but our wildlife, our drinking water and the health of our families. We hope that more states will soon follow suit and pass laws addressing microplastics."

Clean Wisconsin, an environmental advocacy organization, protects Wisconsin's clean water and air and advocates for clean energy by being an effective voice in the state legislature and by holding elected officials and polluters accountable. On behalf of its 10,000 members, supporters and its coalition partners, Clean Wisconsin protects the special places that make Wisconsin such a wonderful place to live, work and play. 608-251-7020, www.cleanwisconsin.org