



# *Toilets Are Not Trashcans!* Protecting Our Pipes, Pumps, Plants, & Personnel

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National Association of Clean Water Agencies

May 9, 2017



# “Wipes in the Pipes”



# Costs for Utilities

## Vancouver, Washington

- \$1.86 million in 2008-2013
  - Capital investments on pump retrofits: \$1.16 million
  - Deragging costs: \$128,000/yr
  - Additional electrical costs: \$30,000/yr
  - Disposal costs for 429 tons of material: \$25,600



# Costs for Utilities

- Clean Water Services in Oregon spends approximately **\$120,000** each year dealing with problems from these products.
- The Orange County Sanitation District in California has spent **\$2.4 million** in the past five years on new equipment, and over **\$300,000** in one year to unclog pumps.
- Columbus Water Works in Georgia spent **\$550,000** in the last two years on new in-line grinding equipment and spends **\$250,000** each year on additional operations and maintenance costs.

# Protecting our Pipes, Pumps, Plants, & Personnel



# What We're Up Against

**Shittens**  
Disposable mitten-shaped moist wipes!

[ORDER NOW!](#) [Testimonials](#) [FAQ](#) [Privacy](#) [Contact](#) [Home](#)

**LIMITED TIME ONLY!** **BUY**

**1 PACKAGE OF SHITTENS**

INCLUDES 20 DISPOSABLE MITTEN-SHAPED MOIST WIPES FOR ONLY

**\$9.95** plus S+H

**ORDER NOW!**

For Baby For Pets For Grandpa For You

**Shittens**

## -Are Shittens flushable?

This is what we like to call a "grey area" (brown area?). Can you flush them? ... While many wipes advertise "flushable," all we hear about are the stories of destroyed septic systems across the country. You know your plumbing best and we'll trust you to make the best decisions for your household. At your own risk, septic-ly speaking. We're going to "Shitten our ass" and not recommend it.



# Who We're Working With

- Wastewater Associations:

- Water Environment Federation (WEF)
- American Public Works Association (APWA)
- Canadian Water & Wastewater Association (CWWA)
- Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA)

## Wipes Industry:

- INDA (trade association of the nonwoven fabrics industry)
- EDANA (European counterpart of INDA)

# How We Got Here

- 2008 – First email to NACWA from a utility
- 2009 – Issue raised in several sources:
  - Emails from two NACWA members
  - Pretreatment Coordinators Yahoo Group
- 2009 – NACWA surveys members to determine extent of problem
- 2010 – NACWA and WEF set up joint workgroup
- 2012 – APWA organizes meeting with Costco
- 2013 – INDA 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Flushability Guidelines published



# How We Got Here

- July 25, 2013 – NACWA, WEF, APWA, and INDA have face-to-face meeting
- 2014 – Technical Workgroup formed
- 2015 – New flushability guidelines development and Product Stewardship Initiative begin
- 2017 – Agreement reached on updated labeling guidelines; work on flushability guidelines with wipes industry ends without agreement

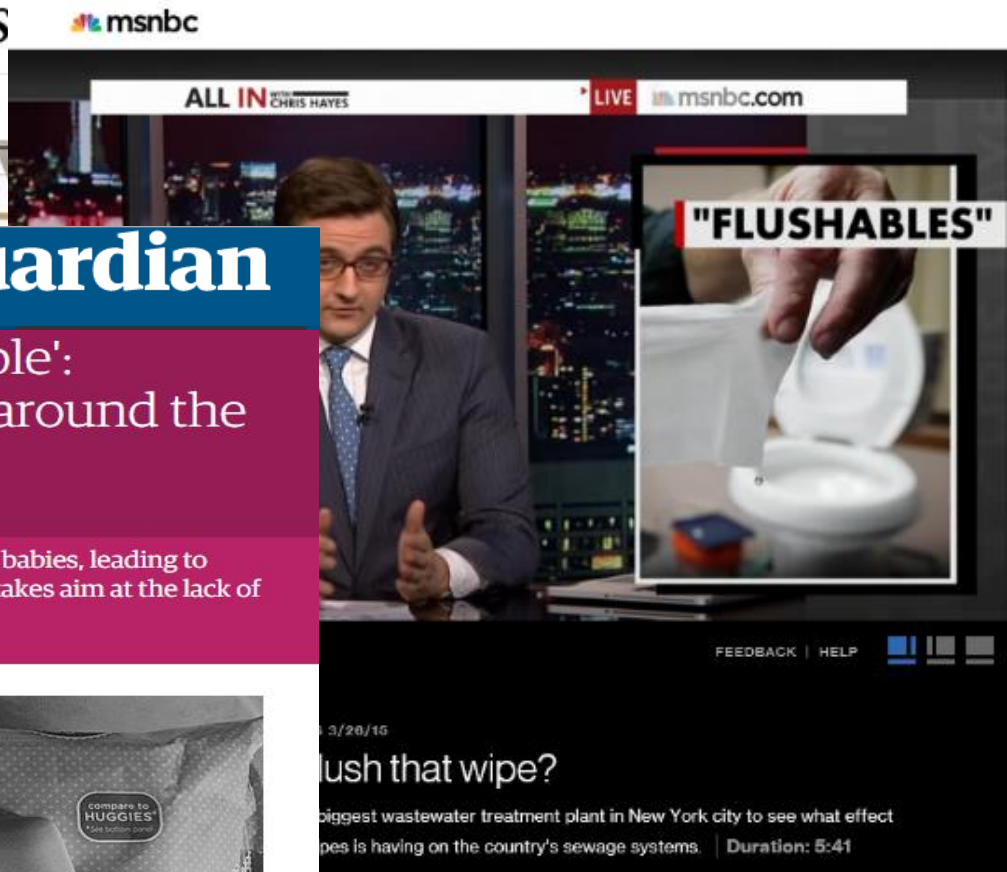
# How to Solve the Problem



# Media Attention



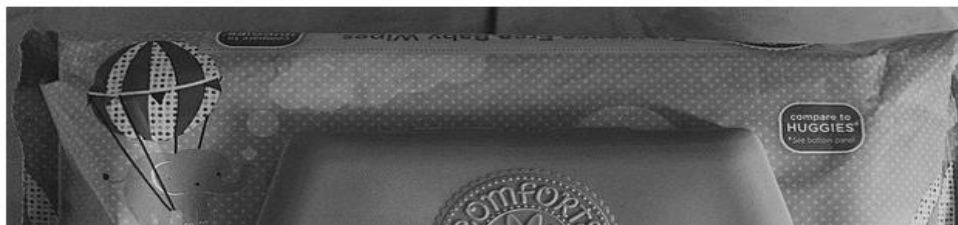
## The New York Times



## theguardian

Don't believe the label 'flushable':  
disposable wipes clog sewers around the  
world

Grownups are now using the same wipes once reserved for babies, leading to millions of dollars of sewer problems. A New York City bill takes aim at the lack of transparency - and mislabeling - some say is to blame





# The Dr. Oz Show

Media



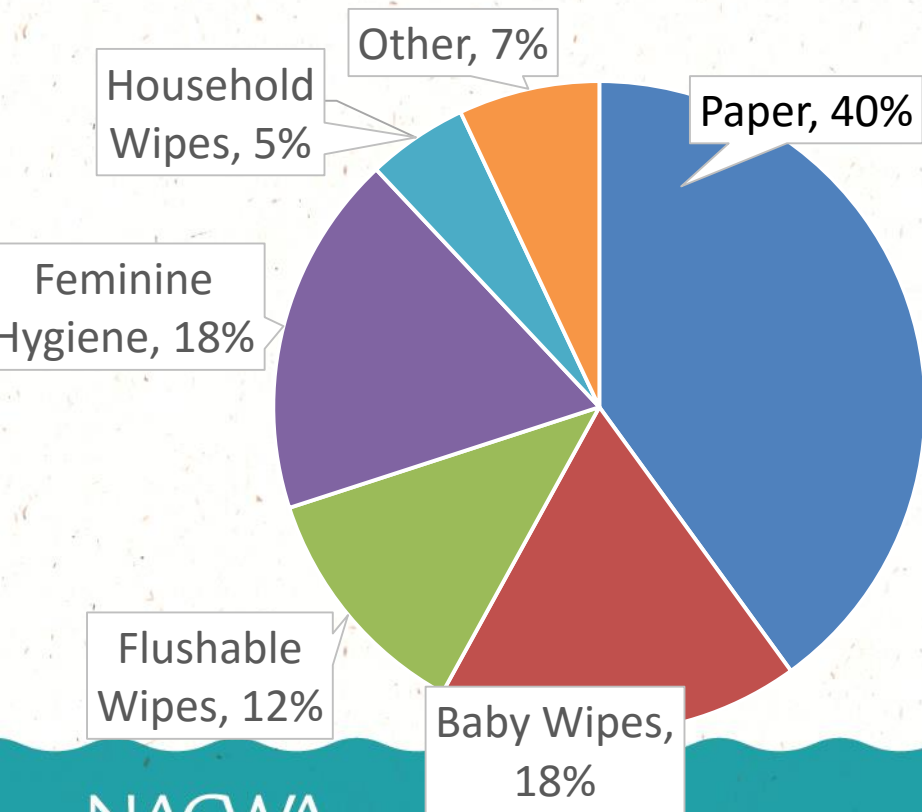
“After seeing all these wipes, I’m officially switching back to toilet paper.” – Dr. Oz

# The Dr. Oz Show

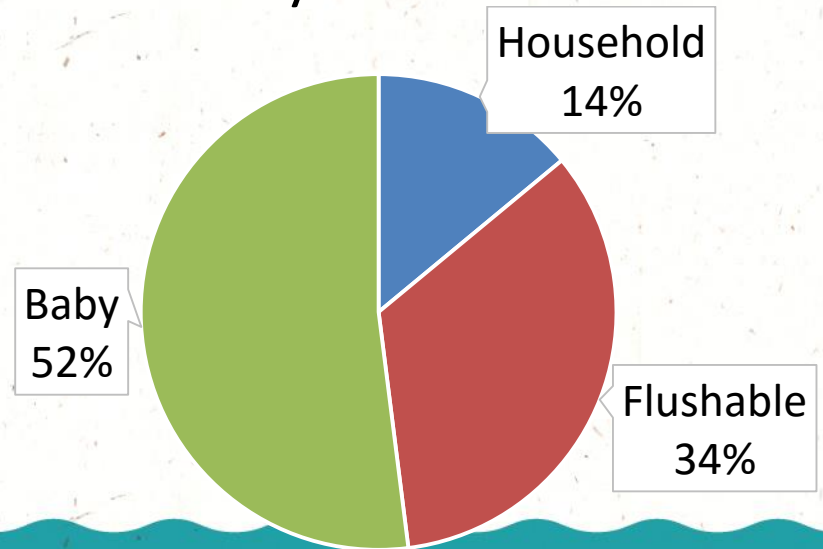


# “It’s Not Flushable Wipes that are Causing Problems...”

## Wipes in Maine Collection System Study



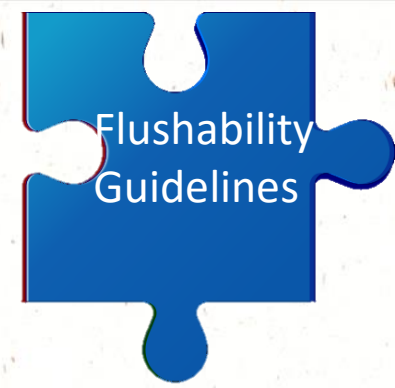
Wipes were 35% of the non-dispersible materials found in the study.





# Are Flushable Wipes The Problem?

- It is not “flushable wipes” – it is “wipes being flushed”
- You could remove “flushable labeled wipes” from the market completely and the problem would not go away
- INDA is sort of correct – but forget they also manufacture the real problem



# What is “Flushable”?

- “GD4” = Voluntary wipes industry guidelines used by INDA and EDANA. Will be consensus with wastewater associations
- ISO technical specification for flushability. International effort with wastewater and wipes industries.



Rob Vilee & Frank Dick

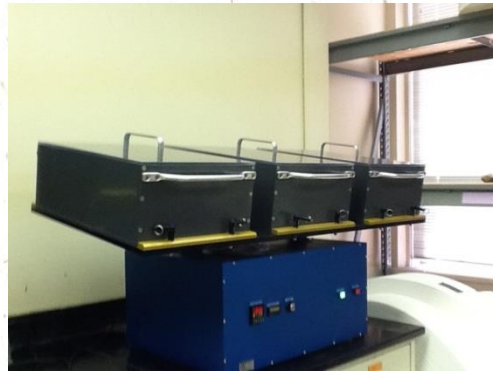
# Current "GD3" Flushability



Toilet & Drainline Clearance



Disintegration Test Slosh Box



Household Pump Test



Settling Test



Meet  
Flushable  
Guidelines

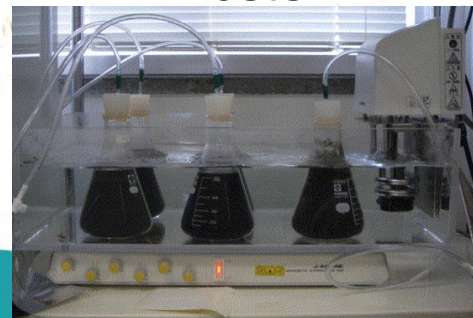
Flushable Claim

NACWA

Municipal Pump Test



Anaerobic Tests

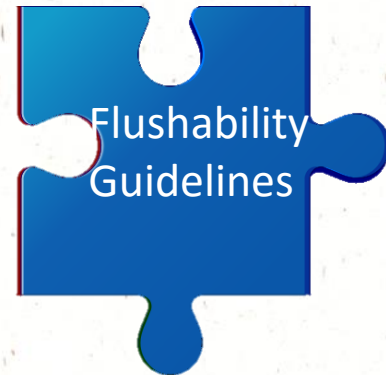


Aerobic Tests

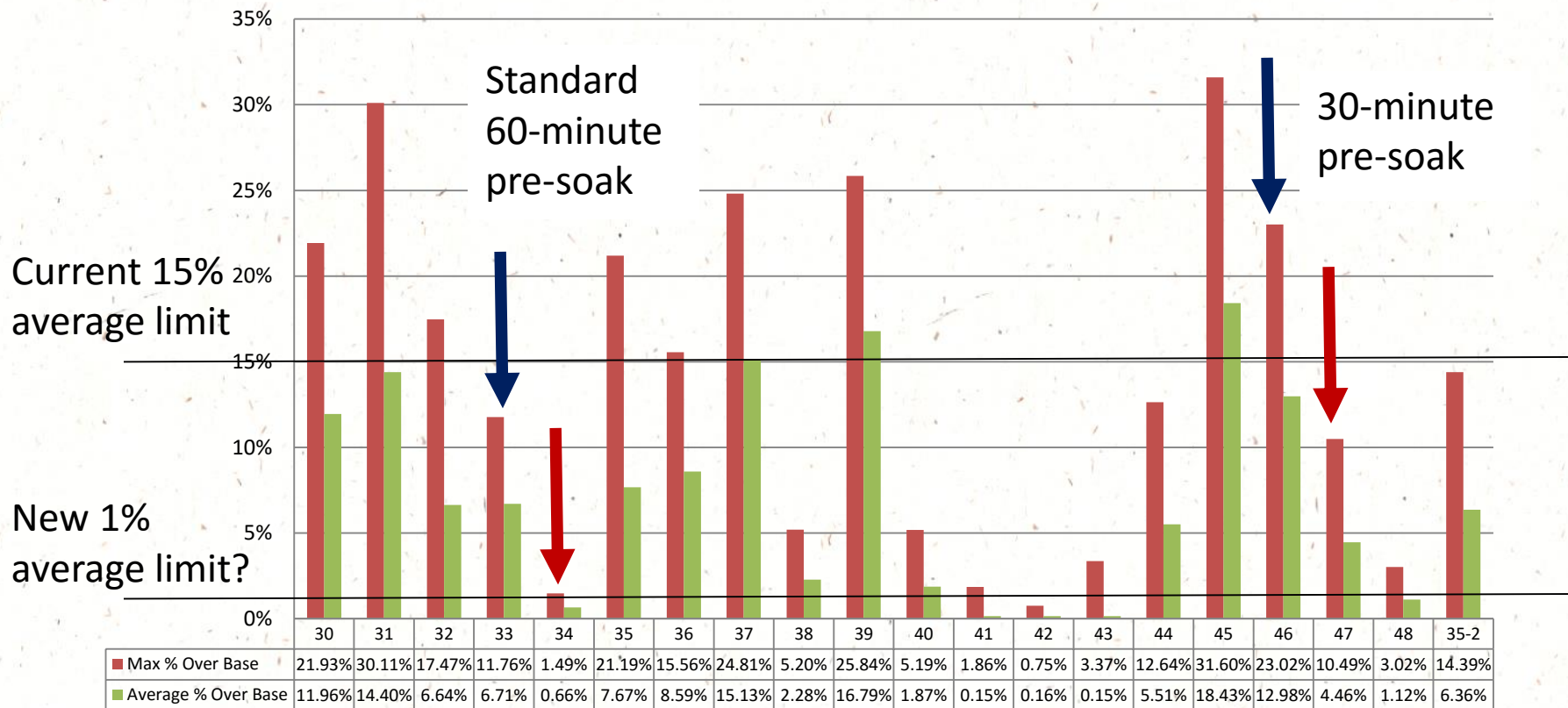




# Municipal Pump Test



Maximum Percentage Over Base v. Average Percentage Over Base





# Municipal Pump Test



- Accumulation in pump at:
  - 1.9% average power draw
  - 5.2% maximum power draw
- 3 hp pump with older type of impeller (Flygt C3085-434)
- 60 wipes at 10-second intervals

# Slosh Box Test

Flushability  
Guidelines





# Field Tests – Vancouver, WA





# Field Test Results

48" pipe, 22" WW depth, 42 min. travel time

Toilet Paper:



“Flushable” Wipes:



# Field Test Results

8" pipe, 30 min. travel time

Toilet Paper:



“Flushable” Wipes:

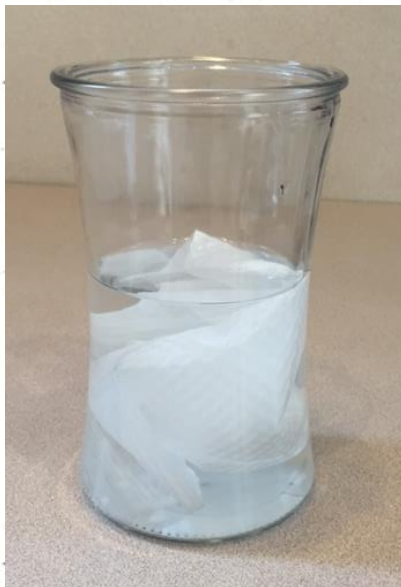




# New Flushability Guidelines Needed

Flushability  
Guidelines

Flushability Guidelines are needed to ensure that wipes in U.S. disperse quickly, like Haso wipes :



Before

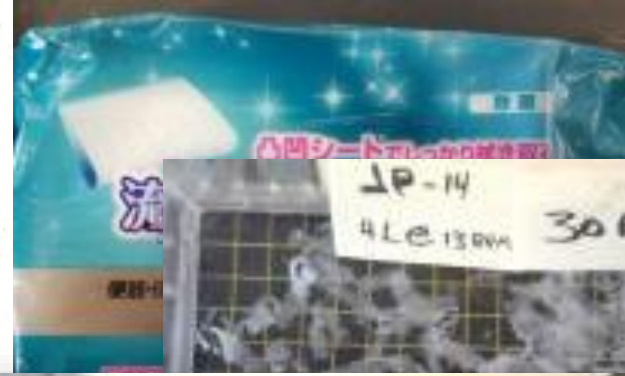
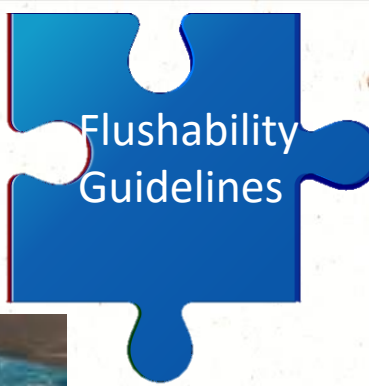


After stirring  
15 seconds



After 30 minutes travel  
in 8" sewer pipe

# “What You’re Asking is Impossible”



US – 60Mins

Japan – 60Mins



# United We Stand!

## Flushability Guidelines

- International Position Statement includes key requirements for flushability:
  - Breaks in small pieces quickly
  - Must not be buoyant
  - Does not contain plastic and will readily degrade in a range of natural environments
- Signed by over 300 organizations in 25 countries

### International water industry position statement on non-flushable and 'flushable' labelled products

To prevent problems with sewers, pipe and toilet blockages plus the human and environmental cost of sewer flooding and pollution, the organisations signing this statement below agree that:

- Only the 3Ps - Pee, Poo and toilet Paper - should be flushed.
- Currently, all wipes and personal hygiene products should be clearly marked as "Do Not Flush" and be disposed of in the bin or trashcan.
- Wipes labelled "Flushable" based on passing a manufacturers' trade association guidance document should be labelled "Do Not Flush" until there is a standard agreed by the water and wastewater industry.
- Manufacturers of wipes and personal hygiene products should give consumers clear and unambiguous information about appropriate disposal methods.
- Looking to the future, new innovations in materials might make it possible for certain products to be flushed, if they pass a technical standard which has been developed and agreed by the water and wastewater industry\*. Preferably this standard would be developed under the banner of the International Standards Organisation (ISO).
- Key requirements for any standard include that the product:
  - a) breaks into small pieces quickly;
  - b) must not be buoyant;
  - c) does not contain plastic or regenerated cellulose and only contains materials which will readily degrade in a range of natural environments.

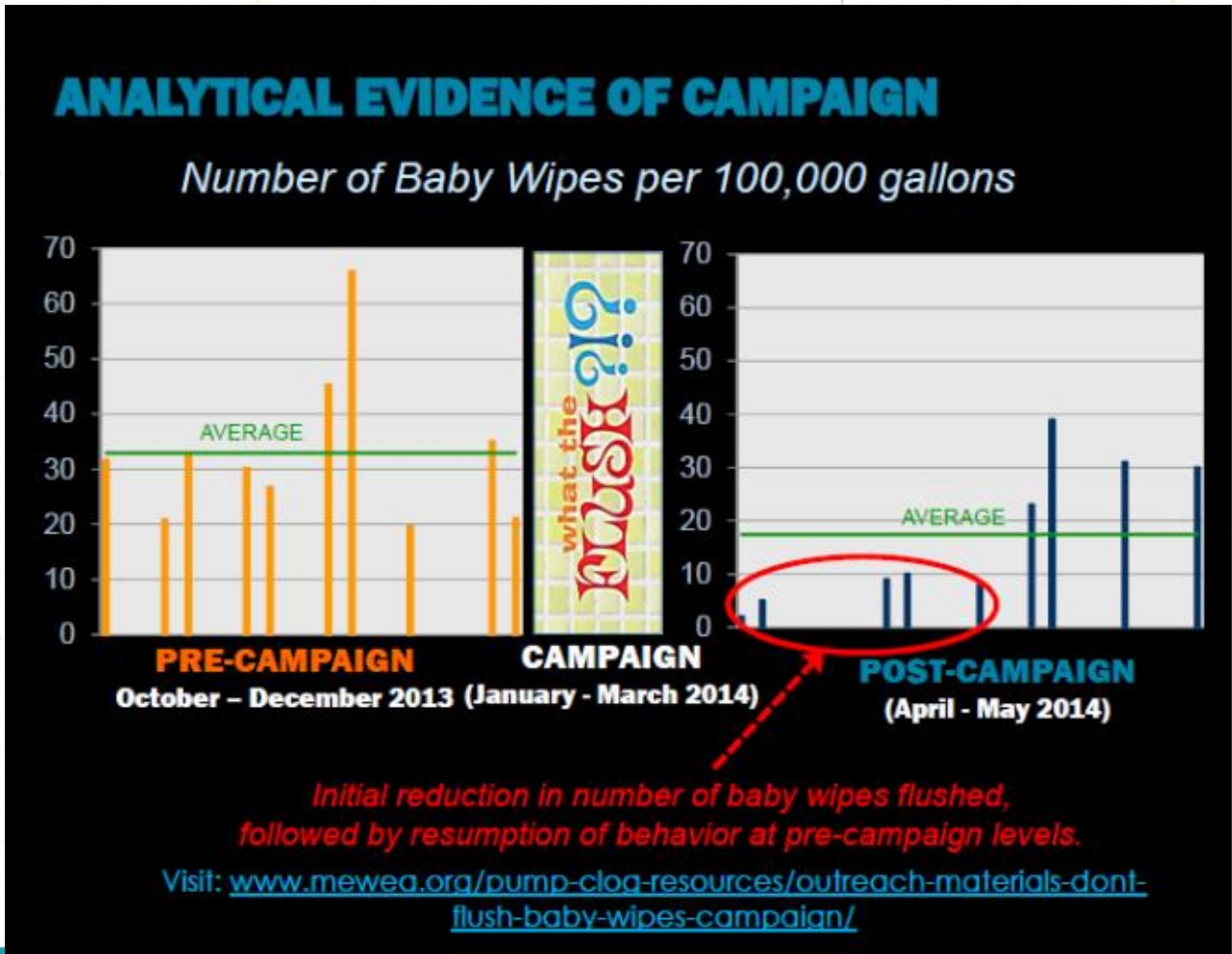
\*and in compliance with local legislative requirements

#### GLOBAL SUPPORTERS:





# Consumer Education – Maine Pilot Project



# Field Study Protocol

Consumer  
Education





# Toilets Are Not Trashcans!




TOILETS ARE NOT TRASHCANS

[www.nacwa.org/toilets](http://www.nacwa.org/toilets)

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[www.albanycounty.com](http://www.albanycounty.com)



TOILETS ARE NOT TRASHCANS

 Please consider the environment before printing



Demonstrations

Flyers

What is:

“Flushable?”



TOILETS ARE NOT TRASHCANS™

When you flush your toilet or pour something down the drain of your sink or tub, what you send away disappears from sight and mind. But it's only begun its journey to the CCMUA's wastewater treatment plant in Camden and beyond. If it's a harmful chemical, it may disrupt the treatment process, or some



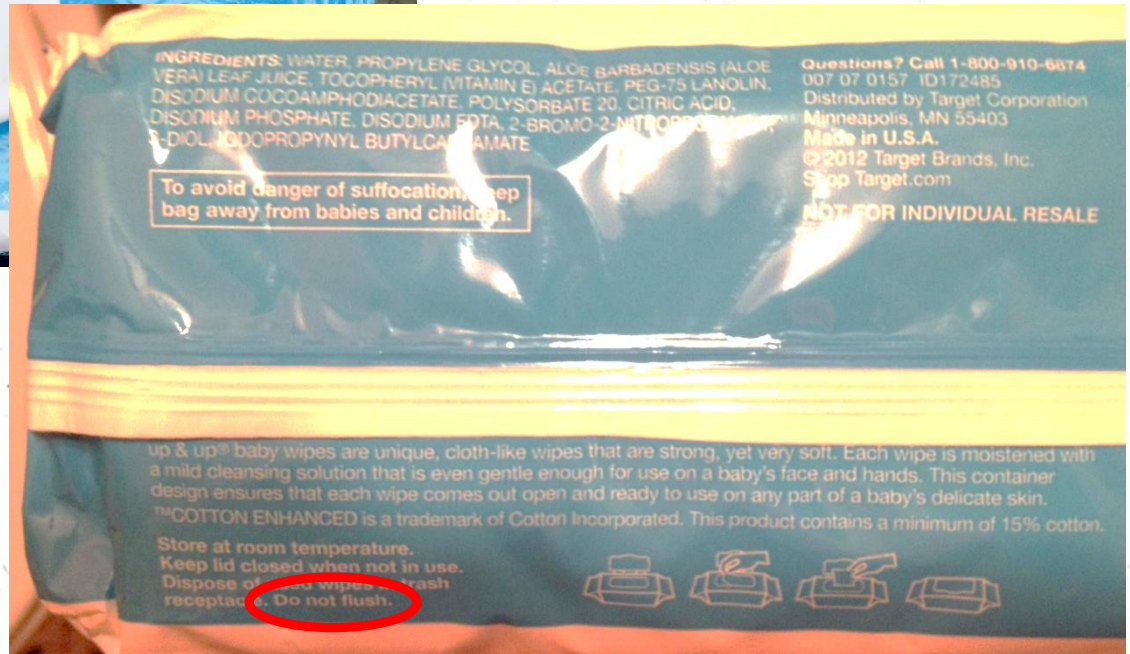
# “Do Not Flush” Labeling

Product  
Labeling

- Product Stewardship Initiative goal is to have wipes industry “exert greater influence over downstream impacts of [their] products”
- Focus on product labeling (INDA/EDANA Code of Practice) and consumer education

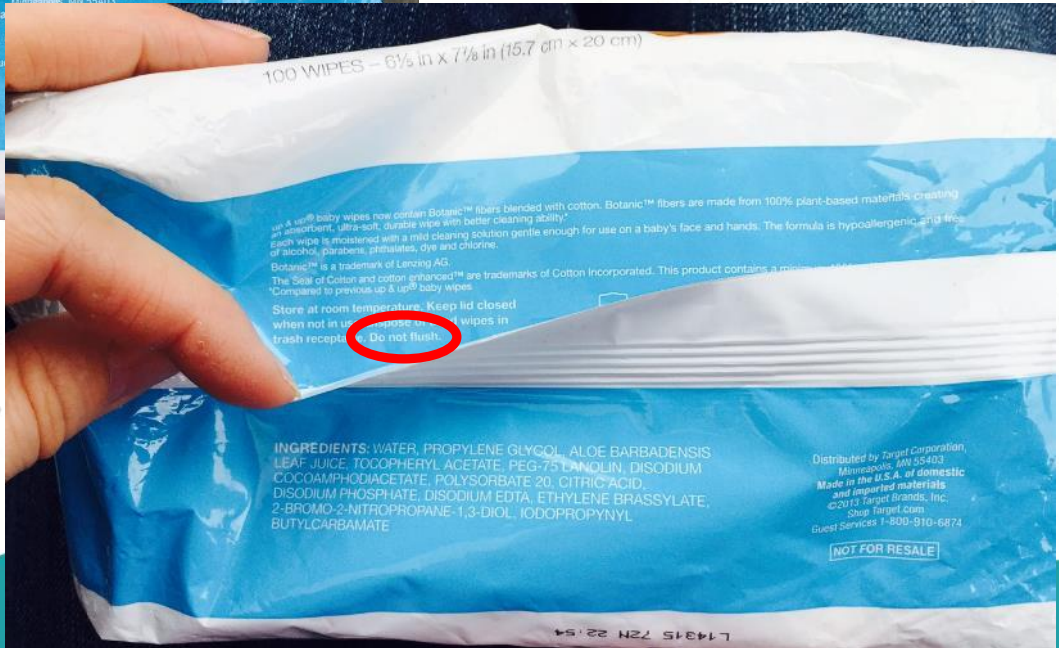
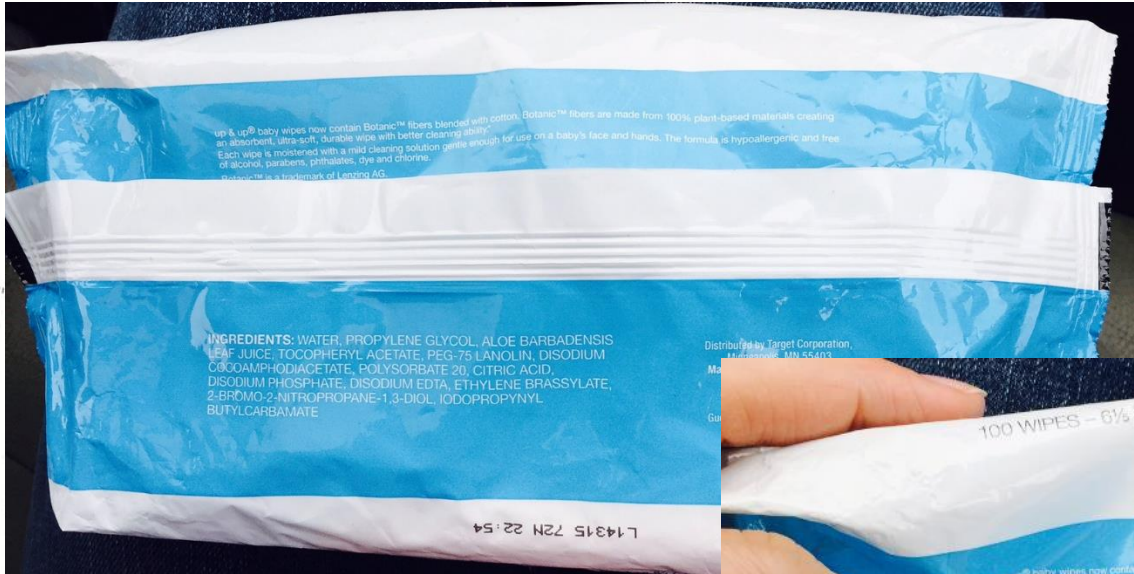


# Unacceptable Labeling



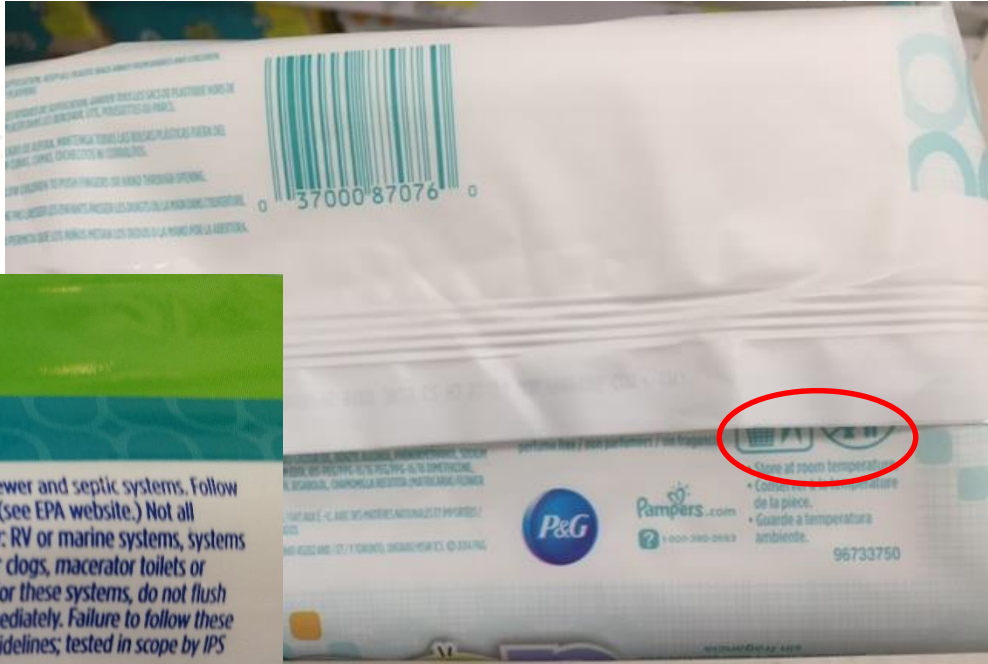
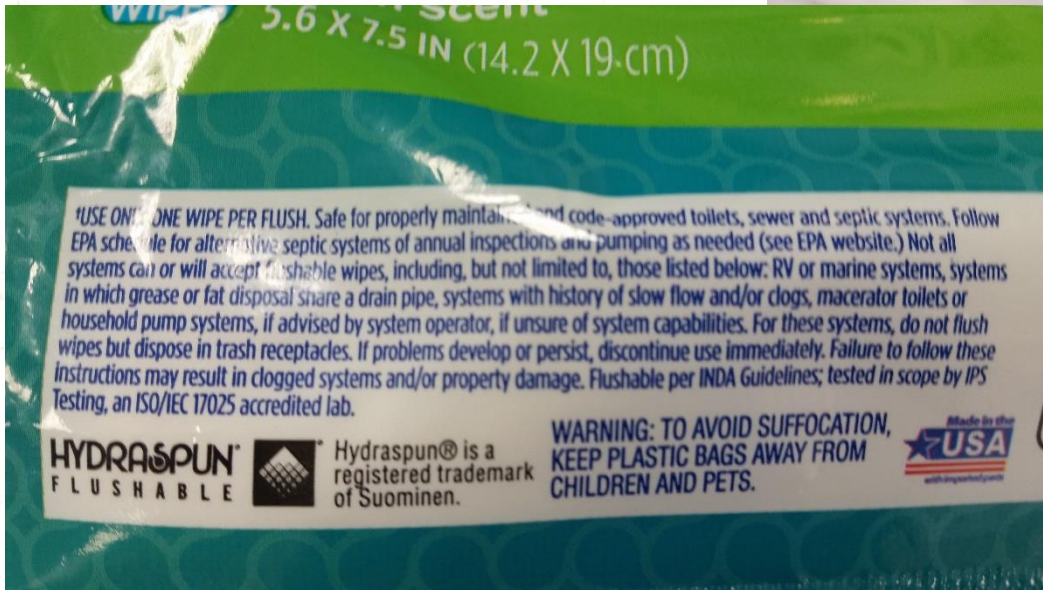


# Even Worse Labeling





# It's a Common Problem!



# Progress?

Product  
Labeling



# Code of Practice



- Updated COP approved by INDA, NACWA, WEF, APWA, & CWWA
  - Wipes used in bathroom must display “Do not flush” logo near point of wipes removal from package
  - Baby wipes should never be marketed as “flushable”
  - Baby wipes, feminine hygiene wipes, incontinence wipes, & body cleansing wipes should have logo visible on shelf and at point of wipes removal from package
  - Compliance by wipes companies is voluntary





# FTC Consent Order



**Consent order with Nice-Pak:** “Competent and reliable scientific evidence” must substantiate that a product will “disperse in a sufficiently short amount of time after flushing” and “replicate the physical conditions of the environment” where the product will be disposed of.

# Class Action Lawsuits



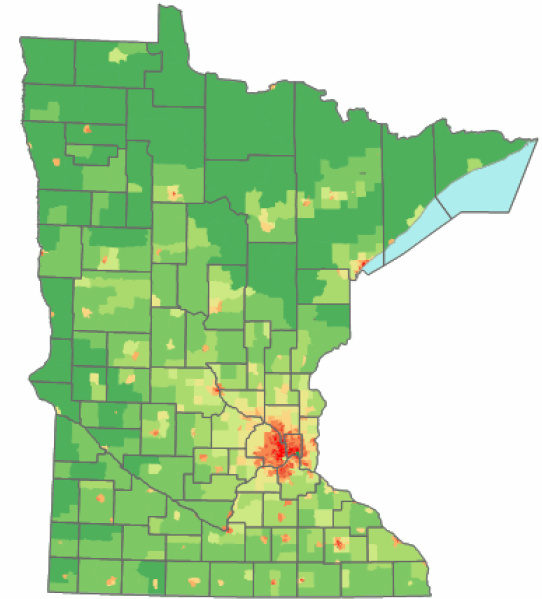
- Multiple lawsuits against flushable wipe companies
  - Individual consumers (paid more for “flushable” wipes that cause plumbing and sewer problems)
  - Minnesota utilities
- Class certified for New York consumer lawsuit



# Minnesota Legislation

Legislation

- Wipes legislation attempted previously in California, New Jersey, & Maine
- In 2016, Minnesota Senate passed SF 2525 by vote of 49-9; House did not vote on bill





# Wipes Legislation



Legislation

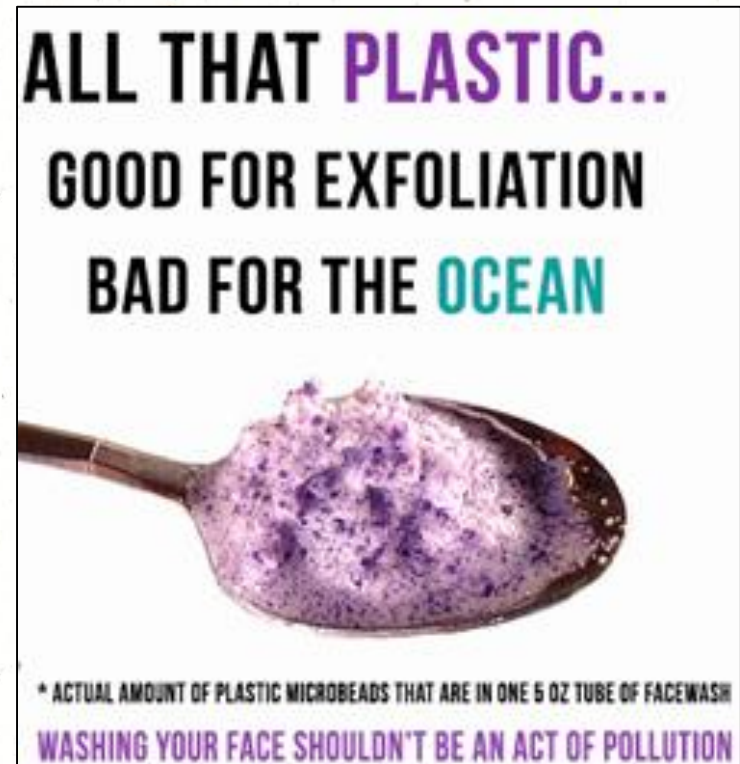
- Wipes legislation passed by D.C. Council on Dec. 6, 2017
  - Establishes flushability standard for flushable wipes and requires “Do not flush” labeling on non-flushable wipes
- Maryland Senate introduced legislation similar to D.C.’s
  - Passed Senate 34-12
  - House Economic Matters Committee recommended bill for interim study



# Microbead Legislation

Legislation

- Legislation passed in many states and individual counties to ban plastic microbeads
- Federal legislation passed in 2015, with support of manufacturers.



[www.truthinaging.com](http://www.truthinaging.com)

# Protecting Our Pipes, Pumps, Plants, & Personnel



- County laws in CA and WA requiring drug take-back programs
- Triclosan: FDA banned in soaps; Walmart is removing from all products on their shelves



# 2017 NACWA P3 Workshop

- May 16, 2017 – Training Day
- May 17-20 – National Pretreatment & Pollution Prevention Workshop



# Questions?

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# NACWA

The National Association of Clean Water Agencies is the nation's recognized leader in clean water advocacy, advancing responsible legislative, regulatory and legal policy on the full spectrum of clean water issues. NACWA represents public wastewater and stormwater agencies of all sizes nationwide, with a vision to represent every utility as a member while helping build a strong and sustainable clean water future.

## Strength in Community



## Strength in Advocacy



## Strength in Resources



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Join Today!

### LEARN MORE

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