



Governor Newsom Signs AB 818 Into Law, Requiring “Do Not Flush” Labels on Harmful Wipes

Las Virgenes – Triunfo Joint Powers Authority (JPA) strongly supports the new legislation requiring manufacturers of wet wipes to include “Do Not Flush” labels on all packaging and to further educate the public on the environmental impacts of flushing wipes down the toilet.

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Calabasas, CA – The JPA is pleased to announce that Governor Newsom signed AB 818 into law, requiring all packaging for diaper wipes, cleaning wipes, and cosmetic wipes to display clear “Do Not Flush” warnings and the universal Do Not Flush symbol. The legislation is critical to maintain public health as wastewater agencies across the state experience a rise in instances of sewer system blockages due to wipes clogging pipes.

The bill is the result of a three-year effort between wastewater agencies – including the JPA – and product stewardship groups and manufacturers to address the urgent pollution problem that has plagued public wastewater infrastructure. The legislation establishes disposal labeling requirements for wet wipes packaging and requires manufacturers of wipes to educate the public on the impacts of flushing wipes improperly.

“Wipes are one of the most damaging regularly-used items to our modern sewage collection and treatment infrastructure,” commented John Zhao, director of facilities and operations for Las Virgenes Municipal Water District and the JPA. “Since they do not dissolve, wipes clog pipes and increase the chance for sewage spills or overflows threatening public health and the environment. Our staff works extremely hard to prevent that from happening.”

Damages to infrastructure from these clogs are estimated to be in the tens of millions of dollars in California alone. The JPA has incurred additional costs, with increased operator and contractor intervention needed to remove clogs from lift stations and sanitary sewer lines, while installing additional pre-treatment machinery, called bar screens, at the inflow of the Tapia Water Reclamation Facility. These additional costs are incurred by

the need for removing wipes from the system before they wreak havoc on the infrastructure and cause potential sanitary sewer overflows.

“The operation of our wastewater treatment system is critical to all residents and businesses throughout our service area,” said JPA Board Director Janna Orkney. “This new legislation is a step in the right direction by helping better educate our community that ‘wipes clog pipes’ and to dispose of them properly - which is in the trash can.”

The bill, authored by Assembly Member Richard Bloom (D - Santa Monica) and sponsored by the California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA), will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2022.

Las Virgenes - Triunfo Joint Powers Authority (JPA) was established between Las Virgenes and Triunfo Water & Sanitation Districts to treat wastewater within the Malibu Creek watershed. The JPA owns and operates the Tapia Water Reclamation Facility and the Rancho Las Virgenes Composting Facility.

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