



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0887-2015, **Version:** *

Preconsidered Res. No. 887

Resolution calling upon Congress to pass and the President to sign H.R.1321/S.1424, known as the “Microbead-Free Waters Act of 2015,” which would amend the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act to prohibit the sale or distribution of cosmetics containing synthetic microbeads.

By Council Members Cabrera, Chin, Koo, Palma, Richards and Rosenthal

Whereas, Microbeads are manufactured particles of plastic that measure smaller than three millimeters in size and are used in various cosmetic products; and

Whereas, Microbeads are commonly used as scrubbing agents and exfoliates in cosmetic products such as facial cleansers and toothpaste; and

Whereas, In normal use, microbeads are washed down drains and cannot be filtered out by wastewater treatment plants before entering marine environments in oceans and lakes; and

Whereas, According to a report by the Office of the Attorney General, microbeads, like plastics generally, are slow to biodegrade and can remain in the marine environment for centuries; and

Whereas, In marine environments microbeads accumulate and attract harmful chemical pollutants already present in the water, such as carcinogenic polychlorinated biphenyls, commonly known as PCBs; and

Whereas, In marine environments the small, buoyant and colorful microbeads are mistaken for food and consumed by fish and other wildlife, thereby harming marine life and contaminating the food chain; and

Whereas, In 2012, a research team sailed and surveyed Lake Superior, Lake Huron and Lake Erie to quantify the degree of plastic pollution in the Great Lakes; and

Whereas, The researchers found an average of 43,000 microbeads per square kilometer in the Great Lakes and deduced the source to be combined sewage overflows from proximate urban population centers; and

Whereas, According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the Great Lakes form the largest surface freshwater system on Earth; and

Whereas, According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Great Lakes are home to 250 species of fish, provide drinking water for over 40 million people, as well as supplying water for industrial and agricultural purposes; and

Whereas, This precious national resource is under pressure from invasive species, such the Asian carp, and the activities of the over 30 million persons who live in the Great Lakes Basin; and

Whereas, There are many non-toxic, biodegradable and readily available alternatives to microbeads, such as apricot seeds, walnut husks, crushed cocoa beans and oatmeal; and

Whereas, Many major personal care companies, in recognition of the problem, have pledged to phase out microbeads; and

Whereas, While nine states have passed legislation banning microbeads, and both New York City and State are considering such legislation, water does not recognize borders and local action is not enough; and

Whereas, Microbeads have been found in the Hudson as well as the Great Lakes and may come to pose a threat to drinking water; and

Whereas, New York City has some of the best, natural drinking water in the country and its preservation is a moral and practical imperative; and

Whereas, The United States is a maritime nation bordered by two oceans, the Great Lakes and mighty

rivers-protection of our waterways is in the national interest; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York, calls upon Congress to pass and the President to sign H.R.1321/S.1424, known as the “Microbead-Free Waters Act,” which would amend the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act to prohibit the sale or distribution of cosmetics containing synthetic microbeads.

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