

## **Do Not Flush Disposable Wipes- Labeling Required Starting July 1**

**[Renton, Washington]— (July 1, 2022)** Today, the Washington Association of Sewer & Water Districts (WASWD) recognizes the effective date of a new law that will benefit the environment, wastewater infrastructure, and residents throughout the state of Washington.

July 1 is the date that the “Do Not Flush” symbol must be on packaging of disposable wipes products sold in Washington State, including baby wipes and cleaning wipes. The law was passed in 2020, with Representative Joe Fitzgibbon as the primary sponsor. He worked collaboratively with industry representatives and utilities around the state to pass a bill that is a win for the environment and utilities.

Disposable wipes that are flushed instead of disposed of in the trash can pose a danger for creating clogs and wastewater overflows to waterways around the state. “Utilities across the country spent an estimated \$440 million in a year removing clogs caused by improperly flushed single-use wipes products. Here in Washington state is no exception,” said Judi Gladstone, WASWD Executive Director. “Proper disposal of wipes in the trash can is the easiest way to help our planet and help our community at the same time.”

Improper disposal of non-flushable products can clog pipes in family homes. In community wastewater systems these products can congeal with fats, oils, and grease to create concrete-like masses known as fatbergs. This can result in sewage spills, contamination of the environment, and infrastructure damage at wastewater facilities. Whether in the home or in the wastewater system infrastructure, it wastes community residents’ money to have to repair the damage that can be caused by flushing disposable wipes.

Nearly 60% of consumers indicated that they have disposed of something non-flushable in the toilet during the previous year in a 2021 survey conducted by WASWD, Association of Washington Cities, Association of the Nonwoven Fabrics Industry, and the Responsible Flushing Alliance. “We are hopeful that this new labeling of disposable wipes will help reduce the practice of flushing wipes that cause so many problems in our wastewater systems,” Gladstone stated.

The Responsible Flushing Alliance has more information about wipes disposal practices at <https://flushsmart.org>.

### **About the Washington Association of Sewer & Water Districts**

The Washington Association of Sewer & Water Districts (WASWD) advances the work of special purpose districts that provide essential water and sewer utility services to 25% of Washington state residents, through education, advocacy, and collaboration.