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June 28, 2021

The Honorable Alan Lowenthal
 U.S. House of Representatives
 Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Lowenthal:

On behalf of the Orange County Sanitation District (OC San), I write to express strong support for your amendment to the INVEST in America Act (H.R. 3684) and urge the Committee on Rules to include the amendment in the legislation.

OC San provides wastewater collection, treatment, and recycling for approximately 2.6 million people in central and northwest Orange County, CA. OC San’s primary mission is to protect public health and the environment through its services. As the regional wastewater provider in north and central Orange County, we have firsthand knowledge of the unique treatment and management challenges and pollution threats to our water supplies. This includes the flushing of non-flushable wet wipes. Many wet wipes are made from plastic which makes them not compatible with sewer systems and infrastructure. Improperly flushing these incredibly durable products results in their getting caught in pipes or accumulating with fats, oils, and grease and becoming larger obstructions that cause costly backups and sometimes result in raw sewage overflows.

Further down the sewer line, wipes tend to weave together and create giant rags which get stuck in pump systems and motors and damage expensive public infrastructure. Additionally, environmental harm can come from flushing wipes since they shed microplastics into the wastewater system that can ultimately be discharged to the aquatic environment.

Your amendment would address this unique problem in a straightforward and reasonable approach, by establishing “Do Not Flush” labeling requirements for non-flushable wet wipes product packaging. By including the amendment into the INVEST in America Act, the package would take a critical step in stopping the flushing of wet wipes at the source and, as a result, decrease the strains that the flushing of these products has upon property owners, infrastructure, ratepayers, and the surrounding environment.

Thank you for your continued efforts to address and develop solutions to the unique problems of the flushing of non-flushable wipes and including the clean water sector in the legislation. Please do not hesitate to contact Jennifer Cabral, Administration Manager at (714) 593-7581 or via email at JCabral@ocsan.gov should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

David John Shawver
 Board Chairman

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