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September 2, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
 Governor, State of California
 State Capitol
 Sacramento, CA 95814
Via electronic mail: leg.unit@gov.ca.gov

RE: AB 818 (Bloom): Orange County Sanitation District Support and Signature Request

Dear Governor Newsom:

The Orange County Sanitation District (OC San) is pleased to support AB 818 (Bloom) and requests your signature on the bill. 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.

AB 818 would establish labeling requirements for wet wipes packaging so that Californians will know how to dispose of these popular consumer products properly. In recent years, wet wipes designed for various daily household purposes have become widely available. Despite voluntary industry labeling guidelines, proper disposal information is inconsistent on wipes product labels.

Some wipes are advertised as “flushable,” which can lead to confusion about what products can be flushed down the toilet and which are instead intended for the trashcan. Because many of these wet wipes are made from plastic, they are not compatible with sewer systems and infrastructure.

Improperly flushing these incredibly durable products results in them getting caught in pipes or accumulating with fats, oils, and grease and becoming larger obstructions that cause costly backups and can result in 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 into the aquatic environment.

Over the last decade, wet wipes have been an increasing problem for property owners, sewer systems, and ratepayers. A recent national analysis indicates California wastewater agencies spend nearly \$50 million annually on operations and maintenance alone to manage this problem which could be much more easily and affordably managed if consumers knew to dispose of wipes in the trash instead.

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AB 818 would ensure wet wipes packaging clearly communicates the appropriate disposal method for the products not intended to be flushed, and further requires wipes manufacturers to conduct education and outreach about the “Do Not Flush” symbol and label notice. This straightforward bill has been mutually agreed to by the wipes manufacturers and wastewater and product stewardship representatives.

For these reasons, the Orange County Sanitation District respectfully requests your signature on AB 818. Please do not hesitate to contact Jennifer Cabral, Administration Manager at (714) 593-7581 or via mail at JCabral@ocsan.gov should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



John B. Withers
Board Chairman