MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Educating Consumers about Plastic Microfiber Pollution in our Waterways

SB 341 - AAC Clothing Fiber Pollution

BACKGROUND
Plastic microfibers are a growing problem, which can have adverse impacts on our waterways and aquatic wildlife. Plastic fibers of varying sizes are being discovered by researchers in estuaries and waterways the world over. Most come from clothing made with microfibers, including fleeces, jackets and other apparel. According to a study conducted at UC Santa Barbara’s School of Environmental Science and Management, more than 1,170 milligrams of microfibers can be released in a single wash, and only about 60% are actually captured by wastewater treatment facilities. The rest escape through the treated wastewater stream and enter into our waterways, where they can threaten fish and other aquatic wildlife.

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS
- Establishes a working group to educate consumers about the harmful impacts of microfibers on marine ecosystems, including innovative labeling solutions to inform consumers of the presence of plastic microfibers prior to their purchase;
- Create mechanisms to identify and disseminate best practices for reducing the disbursement of plastic microfibers into the environment;
- Members of the working group will include representatives of the Sustainable Apparel Coalition, the American Apparel and Footwear Association, the American Apparel and Producer’s Network; Fashion Group International, the National Retail Federation, the Council of Fashion Designers of America, and Fashion Business, Inc.

RECOMMENDATIONS
The proposed legislation is well intended, but could be improved significantly. The need for such legislation clearly derives from the fact that the impacts of plastic microfibers disproportionately affect marine ecosystems and aquatic wildlife. Any working group designed to address microplastic pollution should include specific experts in the field of environmental and marine protection to be appointed to the working group, in addition to the apparel industry representatives currently named in this legislation. The current working group will almost certainly result in a biased recommendation that will not achieve the intended outcome of adequately educating the public about microfiber pollution in a way that could reduce microfiber pollution, or drive the industry towards improved manufacturing practices.

CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS SB 341 - AN ACT ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP ON MICROFIBER POLLUTION

Citizens Campaign for the Environment is an 80,000 member non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to empower communities and advocate solutions that protect public health and the natural environment.

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