

Wastewater Infrastructure Pollution Prevention and Environmental Safety Act: WIPPES Act Passed by U.S. House of Representatives



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The United States House of Representatives has passed the Wastewater Infrastructure Pollution Prevention and Environmental Safety Act (“WIPPES”).

The WIPPES Act is designated H.R. 2964.

The legislation provides that the Federal Trade Commission will issue regulations requiring entities responsible for the labeling or retail packaging of certain pre-moistened, nonwoven wipes (e.g., baby wipes, cleaning wipes, or personal care wipes) to label such products clearly and conspicuously with the phrase, “Do Not Flush”, and an accompanying symbol as depicted under specified industry guidelines.

The WIPPES Act was initially introduced by Representative McClain in April 2023 and referred and ultimately reported out of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce.

The rationale for the legislation is the concern that wastewater treatment systems have been increasingly impacted by clogs resulting from the flushing of non-flushable wipes. The Energy and Commerce Committee cited a 2019 National Association of Clean Water Agencies study estimating that wipes resulted in approximately \$441,000,000.00 in additional yearly operating costs at United States clean water utilities.

The affected organizations are stated to have used outreach and surveys to increase consumer’s understanding of appropriate wipe/flushing practices. However, they argue that through surveys it has been determined that a significant number of respondents believe that non-flushable products are flushable.

As a result, the stated purpose of the legislation is to ensure consumers are clearly notified when a wipe is non-flushable. It would require a uniform national policy to ensure wipe manufactures, or other covered entities appropriately label the packaging of their wipe products with the previously referenced language.

The WIPPES Act also authorizes a grant program at the United States Environmental Protection Agency to support and expand education and outreach activities by states, local governments, and non-profit organizations to rate payers to increase awareness of the label and proper disposal methods.

A copy of H.R. 2964 can be downloaded [here](#).