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# JOEL KITCHENS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 1<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Rep. Kitchens' Microbeads Bill Passes Assembly**

**Madison** – In a bipartisan effort to fight against water pollution, Rep. Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay) today voted in favor of Assembly Bill 15, which he co-authored, banning the manufacturing and selling of consumer products containing microbeads.

Microbeads are tiny, non-biodegradable plastic particles, which are commonly found in personal care products like body wash and toothpaste. The beads are intended to provide an exfoliating effect, but they are so small that they cannot be filtered out when they reach water treatment plants, so they end up being released into Lake Michigan and other local water systems. These microbeads are readily consumed by fish and are a threat to our sport and commercial fisheries. Many toxins attach to the microbeads, causing serious human health concerns.

“Microbeads have proven to be a serious problem as we have found large quantities of them accumulated in Wisconsin’s inland lakes and streams as well as the Great Lakes,” said Rep. Kitchens. “This is an issue that affects us all, so it is good to see legislators on both sides of the aisle coming together in support of this bill and keeping our water clean and protecting our fisheries for generations to come.”

“I authored this bill because it is very important to me and the 1<sup>st</sup> Assembly District. No other district has as much shoreline or has an economy so dependent on clean water.” Rep. Kitchens explained, “I think this bill is a great step forward and it is encouraging that the Legislature can address this public health and environmental concern in a bipartisan fashion.”

Having already passed through the Senate, AB15/SB15 now goes to the governor for his signature.

The bill would make the first ban take effect in 2017 by ending the manufacturing of personal care products with microbeads. The prohibition of the sale of products with microbeads would occur in 2018.

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