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Senator Cowles Statement on Passage of Microbeads Legislation

MADISON- Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) issued the following statement following the passage of SB 15 related to the manufacture and sale of products containing microbeads:

“Today the State Senate took one step closer to removing small plastic contaminants from Wisconsin’s lake ecosystems. This bipartisan legislation, backed by industry and conservation groups in the state, takes necessary measures to reduce and eventually eliminate microbeads from being released into the environment.”

Microbeads are tiny, non-biodegradable plastic particles that are used in the manufacture of some personal care products, such as face washes and toothpastes, due to their exfoliating properties. They are nonessential additives since natural alternatives such as apricot and pecan shell particles, oatmeal and other biodegradable ingredients are available for use in exfoliating products.

Several industry leaders have already voluntarily committed to removing microbeads from their personal care products. “This legislation creates a level playing field and requires all of the personal care products industry to remove microbeads and protect our nation’s waterbodies. “

“I would like to thank Dr. Lorena M. Rios, Assistant Professor of Chemistry at the University of Wisconsin-Superior, for her continued research on plastics and for focusing that research in recent years on the Great Lakes. Thanks to her work, and the work of her colleagues and students, we now know what potential threat plastic particles could cause to Wisconsin’s lakes ecology and potential human health concerns have been identified. Due to this research we were able to craft a bill to safeguard our lakes including the largest freshwater resource in the world.”

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