



SAMPLE

October 29, 2013

Mr. Nick Coe
Chief Executive Officer
Bath and Body Works
7 Limited Parkway
Reynoldsburg, OH 43068

Dear Mr. Coe:

The health of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River are critical to the livelihood of the millions of people that live in the Great Lakes region. This crucial ecosystem is endangered by the presence of microplastics, a significant new pollution threat recently uncovered in the Great Lakes. I am writing as Chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative to express the concern of American and Canadian Mayors about this issue, and to inquire as to your plans to address this serious threat to our important shared resource. We encourage you to phase out the use of microplastics in the immediate future, disclose existing products with microplastics and participate in the cleanup of existing microplastic pollution.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (www.gslscities.org) is a binational coalition of Mayors and other local officials that works actively with federal, state, tribal, first nation and provincial governments and other stakeholders to advance the protection, restoration and promotion of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin. The organization represents over 100 cities of all sizes, with a combined population of over 16 million.

In summer 2012, Dr. Sherri Mason, a professor at SUNY Fredonia, recorded the plastic content of Lake Huron, Lake Erie and Lake Superior and discovered microplastics in greater concentrations in Lake Erie than any other body of water on Earth, with concentrations exceeding data collected in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Alarming levels were also present in Lakes Huron and Superior. These findings were confirmed in a peer-reviewed article released this week by the 5 Gyres Foundation.¹

These microplastics pose a number of threats to the Great Lakes. Firstly, fish, birds and other wildlife ingest the plastics. This can cause internal blockage, dehydration and death in these species. Secondly, they affect the quality of ecosystems and habitats. The

¹ Eriksen, M., et. al. Microplastics Pollution in the Surface Waters of the Laurentian Great Lakes. Mar. Pollut. Bull. (2013).

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Keith Hobbs, Mayor of Thunder Bay, Chair

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John Dickert, Mayor of Racine, Secretary-Treasurer



presence of microplastics on beaches changes the physical properties of the beach, which may contribute to the permeability of beach sand and affect organisms dependent on land temperature. Thirdly, and most significantly, these microplastics transport other pollutants. They absorb pollutants already in the water, such as DDT, polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). When ingested either by wildlife or humans (either directly or indirectly), these plastics contain super-concentrations of these dangerous toxins. The toxins become even more concentrated and dangerous as they bioaccumulate in the food chain.

Your company produces several products that contain microplastics, including Deep Cleansing Hand Soap. It is products like this that contribute to the presence of microplastics in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

The Cities Initiative would like to inquire as to your plans to deal with microplastics pollution. What plans do you have to eliminate microplastics in future products? What plans do you have to eliminate pollution from microplastics already manufactured? What plans do you have to help with the cleanup of existing microplastics that your company's products have already introduced into the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River?

A key step to arresting the damage caused by microplastics is awareness. We request that your company share with us and the general public a list of all products that you produce that contain microplastics and, in particular, plastic microbeads.

As of August 2013, Unilever, Johnson & Johnson, L'Oreal, The Body Shop, Proctor & Gamble, Beiersdorf and Colgate-Palmolive have pledged to phase-out synthetic microplastic beads from their products. All Colgate-Palmolive products will be free from microplastic beads by the end of 2014. We encourage you to take note of Colgate-Palmolive's timeframe, and to move as quickly as possible to follow suit. The damage to our treasured resource only continues with each passing day.

While further damage can be prevented, existing damage will require affirmative remedies. The scope of the problem already created is staggering: the 5 Gyres Institute conducted a study that identified concentrations of greater than 450,000 micro polyethylene beads per square kilometer in Lake Erie. We encourage you to acknowledge your role in this contamination and take responsibility for its remediation.

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The Cities Initiative appreciates your shared concern for protecting the environment and the economy of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River region. We have reached out to the United States Environmental Protection Agency and Environment Canada with our concerns about microplastics and have enlisted the support of the public of both nations for help in reducing the use of microplastics. We look forward to working with all stakeholders to protect the Great Lakes from this important threat.

Sincerely,

Mayor Keith Hobbs, City of Thunder Bay
Chair, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

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