



Washington Association of Sewer & Water Districts

EDUCATE ■ ADVOCATE ■ COLLABORATE

Personal Hygiene Wipes

The proliferation of personal hygiene wipes over the last decade has caused a huge problem in the world of wastewater treatment and the collections systems that transport sewage from its source to the treatment plant. Even wipes that are claimed to be flushable have been tested and shown not to degrade in a timely manner, clogging household pipes, municipal collection systems and pumping stations, and adding to the burden of solids removal at treatment plants. These wipes can act as a nucleus for fats to collect on, creating large “fatbergs” that can take many unpleasant days to locate and eliminate. All of this comes at great cost in time, effort and machinery to utilities, who are then forced to pass these costs on to the utility consumer.

WASWD has been working with other local, state and national agencies to improve labeling (flushable vs. nonflushable, prominently displayed on packages), educating consumers on proper use and the results and cost of using wipes, and working with lawmakers for better labeling, controls and education on wipes. These efforts will continue in the foreseeable future.