YES ON AB 1628 (McKinnor)

California can and must act on microfiber pollution from washing machines.



AB 1628 establishes a science-based standard for capturing microfibers from washing machines as recommended by the California Ocean Protection Council's Statewide Microplastics Strategy. By setting a standard, not a specific technology, and by phasing this in over five years, AB 1628 allows flexibility and time for washing machine manufacturers to integrate this standard into new machines.

Microfiber filters using this standard can capture 90% of microfibers from a load of laundry. A single load of laundry can release up to 18 million microfibers. These microfibers flow via washing machine effluent into wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs), where they primarily end up in the biosolids left over from treatment. These biosolids are then applied to California's lands, releasing these microfibers into the environment.

There are microfiber filtration systems that meet this standard already on the market. Major textile and washing machine manufacturers have already developed partnerships to address the need for innovation (e.g., Samsung and Patagonia). Most of the technology currently available is for inline filtration units (something you add outside of the washing machine) to make up for the fact that washing machines currently do not require these systems, but the technology is the same. Frequency to clean these filters will vary based on their size, but based on peer-reviewed studies is approximately every 1 – 3 weeks.

Some of the filters already on the market:

1. Grundig, a UK-based company, introduced one of the first machines with an integrated filter in Europe.
2. Filtrol (100um mesh size, the standard established in AB 1628)
3. XFiltra (even smaller, 60um mesh size)
4. Samsung even recently teamed up with Patagonia to design a filter for their machines.

Built-in filters are already common in Asia, while not an exhaustive list of the machines, here are some of the products on the market:

1. Hitachi (scroll down on this page to see the removal and cleaning of the filter)
2. Panasonic machines (these available replacement filters show what they look like and the machine models their compatible with in Japan)
3. Haier machines (a fun video here that shows how cleaning these filters is just like cleaning a dryer filter)

Examples of built-in filters






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