

Managing microbeads in personal care products

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I am an environmental scientist and ecologist. I currently work on forest-climate interactions but my PhD research was on marine toxicology. Plastic is accumulating in our oceans at an alarming rate. The plastic we can see is clogging out waterways and killing aquatic life by entanglement and when ingested. The impacts of microbeads are not so obvious because these particles are so tiny. Sewage systems are not designed to remove microbeads so they end up in oceans where they are ingested by small organisms and then move up the food chain. There is evidence that microbeads may help toxins enter the food chain and they, along with these toxins can be consumed by humans when we eat seafood. Since microbeads don't break down, they remain in the ocean.

Microbeads and microplastics are unnecessary in cosmetic products and they should be banned in all personal care products to protect the marine environment and our fisheries. As a consumer, I am prepared to pay more for products that do not contain microplastics. In order to achieve this, I support the government using a broad definition of banned products to capture all personal care products that create this type of pollution. I support the proposed framework for administration and enforcement. I think the timeframe should be as soon as possible but next year seems achievable.