

Subject: Submission to the consultation on banning the sale and manufacture of plastic microbeads in personal care products in New Zealand

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I strongly support a legislative ban on microbeads in New Zealand, and would like to see this introduced as quickly as possible in order to protect our oceans and marine life. I strongly agree with defining the scope of products as broadly as possible. There should be a comprehensive ban on personal care products containing microbeads. The guidelines developed by Fauna & Flora International are useful ones for the Ministry to follow: - Any definition of 'microbeads' must include all solid plastic ingredients smaller than 5mm used for any purpose (not just for exfoliation). There should be no lower size limit included in the definition; - The legislation should cover all products that are washed down the drain. This includes a wide range of cosmetic and personal care products as well as cleaning products, make-up, and other product categories; - Legislation should not allow so-called 'biodegradable' plastics to be used as alternatives, as these materials do not degrade in the marine environment and therefore are not a solution to the problem; - There should be a clear and prompt timeline for phasing out these ingredients, and a date after which products containing microplastics must not be sold. This should be within two years of the ban. I strongly support the consultation document's recommendation to introduce a legislative ban under the Waste Minimisation Act. Voluntary self-regulation has proven ineffective. For example, companies which claimed to have largely phased out microbeads - such as Foodstuffs and Progressive - had not done so. The Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act means that microbead products could enter New Zealand via Australia, despite the ban. I therefore strongly encourage the government to explore all options (i.e. exemptions allowed for health, safety and environmental reasons) to ensure that products containing microbeads do not enter New Zealand shops via Australia. The proposal for a legislative ban on microbeads in New Zealand would be one positive step to protect our oceans from plastics. Yours sincerely, Audrey van Ryn