



California Has Passed A Bill That Bans Plastic Microbeads

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(Photo: Cathy Crawford)

Last week, the California State Assembly passed a measure that would ban the use of plastic microbeads in personal-care products, like face and body scrubs. This is a huge step in the effort to protect wildlife endangered by the tiny plastic particles that have accumulated in rivers and oceans.

For several years, environmentalists have been warning that plastic microbeads are dangerous. They slip through water-treatment plants by the millions. (Last year, we reported that researchers dipped nets into Lakes Erie, Huron, and Superior and found an average of 43,000 microplastic particles per square kilometer.) They are not only dangerous to the fish who ingest them but also potentially dangerous to the people who eat those fish.

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While four other states—Illinois, Maine, New Jersey, and Colorado—have already passed laws restricting microbeads, California's ban is unique in that it prevents the use of both

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California is the only state to prohibit the use of even synthetic plastic microbeads and the biodegradable alternatives some companies are developing. (Similar bills are pending in several states, including Michigan, Minnesota, Washington, and Oregon. The New York State Assembly has approved a ban on microbeads as well, but it has yet to pass the State Senate.)

Companies like Johnson & Johnson and Procter & Gamble have started the process of removing plastic microbeads from their products, and they have begun to seek out natural alternatives, such as oatmeal and walnut shells. In the meantime, we suggest checking out [Allure's list of the top microbead-free exfoliants](#).

By Renee Jacques

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