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**TESTIMONY RE: COMMITTEE BILL NO. 5286 AN ACT PROHIBITING THE IMPORT AND  
SALE OF COSMETICS THAT CONTAIN MICROBEADS**

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT**

March 11, 2015

Good Afternoon, Co-Chairs, Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis and esteemed members of the Committee on Environment

I want to thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA), as a founding partner of the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut. I am Mary Jane Williams Ph.D., RN current chairperson of Government Relations Committee for the Connecticut Nurses Association. I am also a founding member of the National Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments and currently serve on the Steering Committee.

I speak in strong support **COMMITTEE BILL NO. 5286 AN ACT PROHIBITING THE  
IMPORT AND SALE OF COSMETICS THAT CONTAIN MICROBEADS.**

The Connecticut Nurses Association strongly supports this bill that would prohibit the import and sale of all cosmetics that contain microbeads. Microbeads are plastic and create plastic waste, which are not filtered out during sewage treatment, are damaging

water ecosystems. A [report](#) recent published by the U.N. Environment Program says plastic waste causes \$13 billion in damage every year to marine life.

Since the beads are so small, fish and other marine life easily swallow them, causing DNA damage and even death. A 2008 [study](#) from UK researchers showed that the plastics remained inside mussels for 48 days. Last year, researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Superior [reported](#) at the National Meeting & Exposition of the American Chemical Society that there were 1,500 to 1.7 million plastic particles per square mile in the Great Lakes.

The state of Illinois has banned microbeads, this ban is encouraging for other states pushing similar laws, and the fact that Illinois' new ban had industry players on board means cooperation is possible in other regions, too. **“This was a cooperative effort with the industry in order to address our and their concerns,” says Jennifer Walling, executive director of the Illinois Environmental Council. “In the end, we were trying to get something that would pass. Other states should try for more stringent standards.”**

Walling says she's happy with the results, though she wishes the timeline was shorter. Manufacturers have a phase out period between 2017-2019.

Other states like New York, California and Ohio are trying to pass similar bans. California wants to allow biodegradable beads, and New York lawmakers, which worked with plastic-fighting group 5 Gyres, have so far received positive response to their legislation. Earlier this summer, New Jersey democrat U.S. Rep. Frank Pallone Jr. [introduced a bill](#) that would make a nationwide ban possible in 2018.

Microbeads can also be vicious on your skin. While the little beads help deeply cleanse the pores, they can also cause tears if used too roughly. But if you love the feeling of rubbing dead skin off your face (that's what they're for)—there are some natural versions of face wash that use ingredients like oatmeal instead. As TIME [reported](#) in May, companies appear to be open to finding substitutes. And in 2012, consumer goods company Unilever [committed](#) to making all of its products plastic-free by 2015. Big cosmetic companies like L'Oréal have also [pulled away](#) from microbeads. Walling says she has been contacted by several groups in other states trying to outlaw microbeads, and she thinks it will only take about two more states to pass similar bans for the industry effect to be felt nationwide. “

Conclusion: Microbeads are a Hazardous to the environment and possibly to our Health. There is a Nation wide initiative to stop companies from utilizing microbeads.

**Connecticut needs to be one of the progressive states that ban microbeads.** Banning

microbeads import and utilization in Cosmetic is essential to the protection of the environment and the citizens of Connecticut.

Thank you for your time. We strongly urge the committee to support **COMMITTEE BILL NO. 5286 AN ACT PROHIBITING THE IMPORT AND SALE OF COSMETICS THAT CONTAIN MICROBEADS.**

Thank you

Mary Jane M Williams PhD, RN

Chair, Government Relations Committee, Connecticut Nurses Association

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