

# Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-341

**Title:** AN ACT CONCERNING CLOTHING FIBER POLLUTION.

**Vote Date:** 3/22/2018

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/14/2018

**File No.:** 157

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Environment Committee

Sen. Ted Kennedy, 12th Dist.

Joseph Gresko, 112<sup>th</sup> Dist

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

To reduce the amount of microfiber plastic in the state's waterways.

**Substitute Language - LCO 2964**, Change the date when the working group will be convened December 1, 2018 to January 1, 2019 and remove the labeling of microfiber on clothing.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

None Submitted

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

### **Louis W. Burch, Citizens Campaign for the Environment:**

Establishing a working group to address pollution from plastic microfibers is a great plan. He recommends that a specific expert in the field of environmental and marine protection be appointed.

**Dr. Chelsea Rochman, Assistant Professor, The University of Toronto:**

After working for more than a decade in microplastic pollution she helped convene, in October 2017, a working group specifically to address microfibers. Included in the group were members from industry, academia and non-governmental organizations. Microfibers are one of the most common types of microplastic pollution in the environment and clothing is not the only one. Many studies have demonstrated that clothing made from synthetic textiles shed microfibers in the wash. When they shed in the wash they are then transmitted into the effluent travels to waste water treatment plants.

**David Sutherland, Director of Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy:**

Microfibers are released from fleece, nylon and other synthetic fiber clothing when washed. These are increasingly showing up in our rivers, oceans and fish. Anthropogenic debris was found in 25% of individual fish, 67% of all species and 33% in individual shellfish sampled. Anthropogenic debris in the USA was primarily from fibers. Consumer may take relatively simple actions that would lessen the problem such as using cold water, liquid rather than powder detergents, washing synthetic fiber less frequently and washing with fuller loads.

*The Environment Committee received over 135 additional similar letters supporting the bill and urging us to hold apparel companies responsible.*

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Kristen Kern, Government Relations Representative, American Apparel & Footwear Association:**

The bill reaches a non-fact-based conclusion that faults garments made with synthetic fibers for microfiber pollution. The cost and legal liabilities on companies and confusion on the part of consumers are unnecessary. The working group has a prescribed regulatory outcome rather than allowing the group to study microfiber pollution. For years individual companies and trade associations have been participating in microfiber task forces. The first cross-sector Microfiber Leadership summit was held in October 2017. The apparel industry is working together to study the cause of microfibers but this legislation seems to assume that the industry is not currently engaging on microfiber pollution.

**Reported by: Pamela Bianca, Asst. Clerk**

**Date: 04/03/2018**