



Connecticut General Assembly
Environment Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Environment Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly,

I am writing you today in regard to Senate Bill 341, An Act Concerning Clothing Fiber Pollution.

Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) is the national trade association for retailers, manufacturers, and suppliers in the \$887 billion outdoor recreation industry. In Connecticut, the outdoor industry generates \$9 billion in consumer spending, supports 69,000 jobs in the state, and generates \$734 million in state and local tax revenue.

We are concerned that the legislation, as currently drafted, prescribes a regulatory outcome before appropriate research has been done. That research would better identify viable solutions to the management and containment of possible clothing fiber pollution.

Over the past decade, OIA has proactively worked to examine the impacts of the outdoor industry's supply chain on the environment and to develop and implement new tools and best practices. These efforts are led by OIA's Sustainable Business Innovation department, which oversees the OIA Sustainability Working Group (SWG), a pre-competitive, collaborative subgroup of 200 member companies. The OIA SWG affects real change in how outdoor industry products are made and leads the way for global business.

Since 2015, the OIA SWG has convened partners to examine the topic of microfibers and ocean plastics to better understand the topic, articulate and address current gaps in knowledge, and develop and implement best practices for reducing or eliminating microfiber shedding.

In October 2017, OIA—in partnership with Ocean Conservancy, the University of California Santa Barbara Bren School of Environmental Science & Management, and the consultancy Future 500—co-organized the first cross-sector Microfiber Leadership Summit. Attendees at the summit included participants from the outdoor apparel, fashion apparel, home appliance, and chemicals manufacturing industries, along with representatives from academia and research, wastewater treatment plants, textile standards groups, industry associations, consumer solution providers, and government.

The summit culminated in the development of a shared cross-industry road map to keep all parties connected as they work to fill the key data gaps, develop the necessary standards and tools, and implement solutions—all as rapidly as possible. Current projects include the following:

- Research to determine the primary sources of microfiber shedding (fashion apparel, outdoor apparel, carpets, home textiles, etc.)
- Research to determine the primary leakage points of microfibers into waterways (industrial textile washing, cut-and-sew manufacturing stage, consumer washing, etc.)
- Research to determine actual impacts of microfibers on the environment, human health, and marine life
- Working with established testing bodies to develop wet- and dry- test methods, in order to have a consistent way to measure shed rates of various fabrics and fibers (no such standardized method currently exists)
- Working with OIA member brands to develop consumer education about microfiber shedding —what we currently know and don't know, and what they can do now.

In addition to these projects, a formalized group, the "North American Microfiber Shedding Leadership Collaborative," emerged from the October Summit. This group will continue working together to achieve the goals of the road map and develop solutions as needed.

We hope that the committee will acknowledge the body of work underway and invite you to utilize the existing collaborative that includes industry; research and academia; and appropriate NGO's, nonprofits and testing groups.

We welcome the opportunity to work with the committee and your representative into the collaborative, and we offer to report out to the committee on an annual basis regarding the work being done to learn about and address the topic of microfiber pollution.

Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex B.", written in a cursive style.

Alexander Boian
OIA Vice President of Government Affairs