



**Councillor Paul Ainslie**  
Toronto City Council  
Scarborough East - Ward 43  
  
Chair, Government Management Committee

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# EX5.21

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Date: March 31, 2015  
To: Mayor John Tory and Executive Committee Members  
Re: Banning of Microbeads

Recommendation:

1. That City Council support banning the use of microbeads in personal care products and request the Board of Health also support this position.
2. The City of Toronto request the Provincial and Federal levels of government to establish legislation to prohibit the use of microbeads in personal care products.

The use of microbeads in personal care products cause harm to our environment. Microbeads are plastic and most commonly made from polyethylene, the same type of plastic often used to make plastic shopping bags, milk crates and trash bins. Small enough to bypass sewage treatment plants the microbeads enter our fresh water Lake system to become food for animal and plant species. A failure to recognize the negative effects of microbeads from further entering the food chain can ultimately cause dangerous health effects in humans and other wildlife.

In 2013, a concentration of 1.1 million plastic particles per square kilometer were found in Lake Ontario severely contaminating one of our major water sources, large quantities of microbeads have also been found in the St. Lawrence River. The banning of microbeads is spreading in American States such as Illinois and Michigan. Most recently the Government of Canada has advised that Environment Canada is studying the dangers plastic microbeads have on wildlife and the environment. As the largest City in Canada and fourth largest in North America, it would be appropriate for the City of Toronto to recognize the harmful impact of plastic microbeads.

The State of Illinois is the first to adopt legislation banning the use of plastic microbeads in personal care products by the end of 2017 with the banning of their use in over the counter drugs by the end of 2018. The City of Thunder Bay has also recognized the negative effects by taking a lead in supporting a ban on plastic microbeads in Canada. Major Manufactures have taken notice with Proctor & Gamble, Unilever, Colgate-Palmolive, Johnson & Johnson, The Body Shop, and L'Oreal committing to phase out the use of microbeads in their products.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Councillor Paul Ainslie  
City of Toronto, Scarborough East Ward 43