

March 20, 2025

Testimony in support of H5492: Microplastics Reduction Act

To Chair Bennett and the honorable Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

Microplastics are used in everything from cosmetics and toothpaste to clothing and fertilizers. Meanwhile, increasing evidence shows that microplastics are a dire threat to all life on this planet.

Microplastics do not degrade but break down into smaller and smaller particles that infiltrate our soil, air, and water. Via inhalation or ingestion, microplastics accumulate in animals, causing neurological and hormonal changes.¹ Microplastics have been detected in every organ in the human body.² Children are especially vulnerable to harm: even low-level exposure to microplastics at early developmental stages may lead to neurodevelopmental delays, asthma, and a higher risk of chronic diseases.³

Here in the Ocean State, researchers at the University Rhode Island estimate that the sediment on the floor of the Narragansett Bay contains 1,000 tons of microplastics—in the top two inches alone.⁴ The scientists describe their research on the far-reaching effects of these microplastics as “urgent.”

At a time when the federal government is slashing environmental regulations and defunding health research, it’s imperative for the state to prioritize legislation like H5492. Prohibiting the sale of products with intentionally added microplastics is a significant step in protecting Rhode Islanders from the harms of plastic pollution by stopping it at its source.⁵ Please support this important bill.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jessica Allen



37 Lincoln Avenue, Barrington

¹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2405665024000702>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/article/2024/aug/21/microplastics-brain-pollution-health> ³ Sripada, Kam et al. “A Children's Health Perspective on Nano- and Microplastics.” *Environmental health perspectives* vol. 130,1 (2022): 15001. doi:10.1289/EHP9086 <https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/10.1289/EHP9086>

⁴ <https://www.ripbs.org/news-and-culture/climate-environment/researchers-examine-how-microplastics-affecthumans-environment>

⁵ University of Plymouth, UK image showing the contrast in levels of microbeads found in cosmetics products, 2015 (top) and 2018, after the government's ban on microbeads. Microplastics in other products are still an urgent concern.

