

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATOR KARA HAHN



FIFTH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

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**Bellone Signs Hahn and Schneiderman's Legislation
Banning the Sale of Products Containing Microbeads**



(HAUPPAGUE-October 27, 2015) – On October 26th, County Executive Steve Bellone was joined by Legislators Kara Hahn, William Spencer, Sarah Anker and Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director-Citizens Campaign for the environment to sign into law legislation banning
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the sale of products that contain microbeads. On October 6th, Suffolk County legislators voted unanimously to ban the sale of personal care products that contain microbeads due to the potential harm they cause to the environment.

“Signing this legislation into law is a no brainer,” said County Executive Bellone. “We need to all we can to protect our waterways and ensure that our seafood is not contaminated by microbeads or by the organisms that attach themselves to microbeads.”

Microbeads are plastic microspheres that are widely used in cosmetics as exfoliating agents and personal care products such as toothpaste, as well as biomedical and health science research, microscopy techniques, fluid visualization and fluid flow analysis, and process troubleshooting. Based on scientific research, these beads are easily passing through water filtration systems without disintegrating. Once this takes place, these microbeads and the toxins that cling to them can be ingested by fish, clams, oysters, crabs etc, thus contaminating the food chain.

“The threat posed by microbead waste is of national consequence. The cumbersome task of tackling this issue municipality to municipality and state to state, will never prove as effective as a comprehensive policy,” said Legislator Hahn. “We are in need of a solution that will provide for a continuum in microbead policy, but should efforts fail in Albany and Washington, today’s bill signing puts Suffolk County on the right side of history and nature on this issue.”

“These small beads are causing big problems,” said Legislator Schneiderman. “Contaminant laden plastic particles are being ingested by marine life and are damaging our ecology.”

Microbead pollution has already been found in the Great Lakes, the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers, the Erie Canal, as well as the Los Angeles River and the Pacific Ocean and if left unaddressed, Suffolk County local waterways could be polluted with microbeads as well.

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“What you don’t see can hurt you- microbeads pose a threat to our environment and our health”, said Legislator Anker. “I applaud the efforts of my colleagues and have proudly co-sponsored this bill, which will provide significant progress toward protecting our waterways, environment, and health.”

"Microbeads pose a massive risk to our waterways as marine creatures like fish, clams, oysters, and crabs ingest them and then enter the food chain. Our wastewater treatment systems are simply not equipped to filter them out. The only viable solution is to ban them." said Marcia Bystryn, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters. "I'm thrilled to join Legislator Kara Hahn and County Executive Steve Bellone as they not only make Suffolk the largest county in the state to ban microbeads but also send a loud message to the companies producing them that the time to phase out these tiny toxic beads is now."

The initiative, sponsored by Legislator Kara Hahn, institutes a local phase-out beginning January 2018 for personal care products not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration and January 2019 for ones that are.

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