

Rt Hon David Cameron MP,
10 Downing Street,
London, SW1A 2AA

June 8th, 2016

Dear Prime Minister,

It's not often that businesses call on government to regulate their own industry. This year has seen growing consumer concern over the use of plastic "microbeads" in personal care products, including a petition over 300,000 signatories strong due to be handed in June 8th, World Oceans Day. As businesses operating in this field, we share this concern and believe the time has come for government to step in.

Microplastics are a direct source of oceanic pollution, making their way to the sea from our sinks, toilets and showers after just a few seconds of use. Yet like all plastics, they may last for centuries in our seas and harm marine life.

Removing plastics from personal care products is the most efficient and cost-effective way of stopping this pollution. 'End of pipe' solutions through upgrading of sewage treatment plants would be far more costly.

Furthermore, the use of these plastics is unnecessary: environmentally-friendly alternatives exist, and are available at similar cost.

None of our companies use microplastic ingredients for any function in any of our products, and feel that the quality of our products does not suffer due to this absence. We have also found many of our customers are reassured that they are not contributing to the growing problem of microplastic pollution when using our products.

We believe that microplastic beads and particles should never be used in personal care and domestic cleaning products. It is unacceptable for industry to produce products that pollute our oceans when alternatives are readily available.

Unfortunately, many others in our industry have been dragging their feet on this issue. Whilst some have commitments in place, these mostly do not cover all product types and many have long or unclear phase-out targets. We now feel that given the voluntary approach has proven neither comprehensive nor expeditious enough, the government should pursue a legislative route and ban microplastics being used in such products. It would furthermore send a clear message that use of ingredients that have such negative impacts for so little gain will not be permitted.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Curtis, Deputy Chair, Neal's Yard Remedies
Kim Allan, Managing Director, Botanical Brands
Charlotte Vøhtz, Managing Director, Green People
Sarah Brown, Founder, Pai Skincare

