

STAFF REPORT

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG



Report to:	Mayor and Council Members	Priority:	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low
Submitted by:	Jennifer Leno Environmental Technician Public Works Environmental Services jleno@cobourg.ca	Meeting Type:	Open Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting Date:	March 29, 2021		
Report No.:	Public Works-016-21		
Submit comments to Council			

Subject/Title: International Water Services Flushability Group – Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council support the International Water Services Flushability Group (IWSFG) in their objectives to develop and maintain clear standards that define suitable criteria for products that can be flushed down toilets and drains, to protect wastewater collection and transfer systems, treatment plants, their workers and the environment

FURTHER THAT Council direct the Mayor and Clerk to execute a Memorandum of Understanding that embodies the Town's support of the IWSFG.

1. STRATEGIC PLAN

N/A

2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

N/A

3. PURPOSE

To support the IWSFG objectives and execute a Memorandum of Understanding that embodies the Town's support.

4. ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION

Sewer Use By-Law 22-2008

5. BACKGROUND

A continuous concern in the Town's sanitary sewer collection system is the misguided disposal of materials marked as 'flushable'. These materials such as baby wipes, feminine hygiene products, diaper liners, body wipes and cleaning wipes are often disposed of by flushing down the toilet because the packaging has a label that says 'flushable'. However, this label is misleading as these products do not disintegrate or breakdown once they enter the collection system. The flushing of these items into the Town's sewer system can result in clogged and damaged pumps, blocked screens, accumulations in the wastewater treatment plant and sewer blockages when they mix with other wastes such as fats, oils and grease.

The Environmental Services Department have frequently requested that everyone in Cobourg "Think Before You Flush" and have had media releases provided to the public to raise awareness of the issues of flushing these products.

6. ANALYSIS

The Association of Non-Woven Fabrics industry represents manufacturers of flushable products and has provided them with guidelines to determine the 'flushability' of a product. These guidelines are voluntary and the testing of these 'flushable' products is performed in-house by the manufacturers themselves which is subsequently a conflict of interest. The criteria set out for passing these tests are set by the manufacturers and are not stringent enough to protect the real world sanitary sewer collection system.

As such, the IWSFG's goal is to develop and maintain clear standards that define suitable wastewater utility approved criteria for products that can be flushed down toilets and drains.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACTS

There are no financial implications

8. CONCLUSION

The IWSFG in conjunction with other water and wastewater associations and municipal groups from around the world and within Canada commit to:

- Establishing clear, sustainable global specifications on 'flushability' that can be used by standard bodies or others within each country;
- Supporting organizations in the implementation phases of any agreed 'flushability' specifications;
- Creating an awareness of the IWSFG objectives among non-member water/wastewater service groups;
- Seeking the collaboration of other stakeholders to protect wastewater services, infrastructure, receiving waters and the environment from flushable products.

The Town's Environmental Services staff recommends the execution of the Memorandum of Understanding to support the objectives of the IWSFG in addressing the impacts of 'flushable' products on the Town's wastewater infrastructure.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	<u>International Water Services Flushability Group - Memorandum of Understanding - Public Works-016-21.docx</u>
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Mar 11, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Bill Peeples, Manager of Environmental Services - Mar 9, 2021 - 2:45 PM

Laurie Wills, Director of Public Works - Mar 9, 2021 - 4:34 PM

Tracey Vaughan, Chief Administrative Officer - Mar 11, 2021 - 2:45 PM