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Senate Committee Takes on Emerging Microplastics Threat

Democratic legislation would protect Great Lakes, human health

LANSING, Mich. (Sept. 9, 2025) — Today, the Michigan Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Agriculture heard testimony on legislation to prevent and clean up microplastics pollution. Senate Bills [503-505](#) were sponsored by the committee chair, Sen. **Sue Shink** (D-Northfield Twp), and Sens. **Dayna Polehanki** (D-Livonia) and **Jeff Irwin** (D-Ann Arbor). Joining them in testimony were the sponsors of mirror legislation in the House, Reps. **Veronica Paiz** (D-Harper Woods), **Laurie Pohutsky** (D-Livonia), and **Denise Mentzer** (D-Mt. Clemens). Additional testifiers included Dr. Donna Kashian, President of the International Association of Great Lakes Research, and other environmental advocates.

“Everyone deserves to have confidence that their drinking water is safe,” said Sen. **Polehanki**. “We know microplastics are increasingly found in drinking water, but we don’t know enough about their effects, or how best to monitor and mitigate them. This legislation would direct EGLE to assess the risks posed by microplastics and recommend best practices to drinking water utilities.”

“We’re learning more about the hazards of microplastics every day, and finding them in new and concerning places,” said Sen. **Shink**. “We need a plan to proactively research the scale of the problem and take the necessary steps to deal with it, instead of scrambling to react after it gets out of hand. My legislation would set up statewide research and craft a strategy so we can protect ourselves and our environment from microplastics.”

“The best way to protect people and the Great Lakes from microplastics is to cut off pollution at its source,” said Sen. **Irwin**. “My bill would ban plastic microbeads so that they don’t end up in our water. With microplastics showing up everywhere from fish to human brain tissue, corporations need to switch to safer formulations so that people aren’t unknowingly lathering up with microplastics and rinsing them down the drain with every shower.”

Microplastics are about the size of a grain of rice or smaller and widespread in our environment, where they are found in water, sediment, wildlife, and even the air we breathe. Some are intentionally manufactured to be that size, such as microbeads, and others are the result of larger pieces of plastic breaking apart into smaller pieces, like litter and textiles. This persistent pollutant has been found in drinking water drawn from the Great Lakes, where the [concentrations of microplastics in fish found in the Great Lakes](#) are some of the highest in the world.

Once ingested or inhaled by humans, microplastics can accumulate in the body over time, such as within critical organs like the [brain](#) and [reproductive system](#). While the research on human [health effects of microplastics](#) is ongoing, microplastics have been associated with inflammation, cell damage, immune system dysfunction, and neurological issues. Microplastics’ tendency to [carry other harmful chemicals](#) into

the body adds to the urgency of addressing microplastic pollution and reinforces the need for policies that prevent it.

The bicameral bill package would:

- **Senate Bill 503 (Irwin)/House Bill 4766 (Pohutsky):** Ban the sale or manufacture of products containing microbeads.
- **Senate Bill 504 (Polehanki)/House Bill 4768 (Paiz):** Create a microplastics drinking water program at EGLE to test public drinking water supplies for microplastics, make a risk assessment, and recommend actions for future monitoring and mitigation.
- **Senate Bill 505 (Shink)/House Bill 4767 (Mentzer):** Create a statewide microplastics research and monitoring plan to assess the scale of microplastics contamination and the risks it poses to human health and the environment and make recommendations for action and policy changes as part of a comprehensive strategy for addressing microplastics.

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