

**The Legislative Council of the  
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region**

**Bills Committee on Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources Bill**

**Invitation for submissions**

**1. Background of JGI**

We at the Jane Goodall Institute Hong Kong would like to raise our concerns with the government on the dangers of microplastics in Antarctic waters and the need for investigation in our imports of marine species from Antarctic fishing industries.

**2. Antarctic Marine Life and Microplastics**

We would like to commend the Hong Kong government, through the legislative council, for inviting interested parties to contribute to the efforts on conservation of Antarctic marine living resources.

We understand that the current bill is focused on the protection of the Antarctic Toothfish and enforcing regulations on the fishing industries surrounding it. We at the Jane Goodall Institute Hong Kong would like to indicate that there have been microplastics found in Antarctic waters, with seven out of eight samples of Antarctic waters tested to have contained microplastics<sup>1</sup>. The diet of the Antarctic Toothfish consists of crustaceans<sup>2</sup>. It has been found that krill has been noted to consume microplastics<sup>3</sup> and is a source to how microplastics enter the food chain. Once microplastics enter the food chain the digestive system absorbs toxins collected by the microplastic and deposits and stores them in the fatty tissue.

One of the largest concerns for us is the output in microbeads from personal care products by our city. It is believed that 80% of the plastic found in our oceans originates from inland activities<sup>4</sup>. Microbeads can be found in products such as exfoliating cleansers and some types of toothpaste, these manufactured microplastics wash into our drainage and escape the filtration process which allow them to enter our oceans<sup>5</sup>. There are products for sale in Hong Kong that are also incorrectly labelled and omit the presence of microbeads in the product<sup>6</sup>.

We would like to direct the Hong Kong government's attention to the work in Taiwan where the ban on microbeads in personal care products has been implemented earlier this year in July<sup>7</sup>. A number of countries have joined the movement of banning microbeads such as the United States and France, with the United States having passed the Microbead-Free Waters Act of 2015<sup>8</sup>. We urge the Hong Kong government in taking similar steps to reducing the microplastic output of our city in any way we can.

**3. Policy Suggestions**

We urge the HK Government to consider the following suggestion:

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.scmp.com/news/world/article/2149693/plastic-contamination-reaches-antarctica-earths-last-great-wilderness> (SCMP, 2018)

<sup>2</sup> Goldsworthy, Simon & Lewis, M & Williams, R & He, X & Young, Jock & Van den Hoff, John. (2002). Diet of Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*) around Macquarie Island, South Pacific Ocean. *Marine and Freshwater Research*. 53. 49-57. 10.1071/mf00075.

<sup>3</sup> Waller C. L., Griffiths H. J., Waluda C. M., Thorpe S. E., Alamo I., Moreno, B., Pachterres C. and Hughes, K. (2017). Microplastics in the Antarctic marine system: An emerging area of research. *Science of the Total Environment* Volume 598 15th November 2017, Pages 220-227

<sup>4</sup> <http://plasticoceans.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Fact-sheet-2-how-does-the-plastic-get-to-the-sea.pdf> (Plastic Oceans, 2017)

<sup>5</sup> <https://response.restoration.noaa.gov/about/media/what-do-we-know-today-about-microbeads-and-microplastics-ocean.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/2027485/no-proper-labelling-half-beauty-products-major>

<sup>7</sup> <http://m.focustaiwan.tw/news/asoc/201806190023.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-114hr1321enr/pdf/BILLS-114hr1321enr.pdf>

1. To ban the use of microbeads in cosmetic and personal healthcare products that are sold in Hong Kong. With no market for microbeads the manufacture and use of them will cease to exist.

### Appendix:

#### **1. JGI Bio:**

Founded by renowned primatologist Dr. Jane Goodall, the Jane Goodall Institute is a global nonprofit dedicated to wildlife research, education and conservation. The primary focus of the Jane Goodall Institute Hong Kong office is “Jane Goodall’s Roots & Shoots”, an education program which empowers young people to care for the environment, the community and animals through action.

#### **3. Reference**

##### **Data on Microbeads:**

<https://response.restoration.noaa.gov/about/media/what-do-we-know-today-about-microbeads-and-microplastics-ocean.html> (Office of Response and Restoration, 2015)

##### **Diet of Toothfish:**

Goldsworthy, Simon & Lewis, M & Williams, R & He, X & Young, Jock & Van den Hoff, John. (2002). Diet of Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*) around Macquarie Island, South Pacific Ocean. Marine and Freshwater Research. 53. 49-57. 10.1071/mf00075.

##### **Greenpeace report on Microplastics in Antarctic waters:**

<https://storage.googleapis.com/p4-production-content/international/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/4f99ea57-microplastic-antarctic-report-final.pdf>

##### **Krill consuming Microplastics:**

Waller C. L., Griffiths H. J., Waluda C. M., Thorpe S. E., Alamo I., Moreno, B., Pacherres C. and Hughes, K. (2017). Microplastics in the Antarctic marine system: An emerging area of research. Science of the Total Environment Volume 598 15th November 2017, Pages 220-227

##### **Microbead-Free Waters Act of 2015:**

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-114hr1321enr/pdf/BILLS-114hr1321enr.pdf>

##### **Plastic Oceans statistics:**

<http://plasticoceans.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Fact-sheet-2-how-does-the-plastic-get-to-the-sea.pdf> (Plastic Oceans, 2017)

##### **Plastic Contamination in Antarctic waters:**

<https://www.scmp.com/news/world/article/2149693/plastic-contamination-reaches-antarctica-earths-last-great-wilderness> (SCMP, 2018)

##### **Omitting microbeads from cosmetic product labels:**

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/2027485/no-proper-labelling-half-beauty-products-major> (SCMP, 2016)

##### **Taiwan ban on microbeads:**

<http://m.focustaiwan.tw/news/asoc/201806190023.aspx> (Focus Taiwan News Channel, 2018)