



# ANNUAL REPORT & TIMELINE



[www.FlushSmart.org](http://www.FlushSmart.org)

# RESPONSIBLE FLUSHING ALLIANCE

## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

We're the Responsible Flushing Alliance, and we'd like you to know us better. We've been on a journey that's seen us grow from serving as a PR council to a standalone, consumer focused, trade association working to provide relevant education and helpful tips around the "Do Not Flush" symbol and what should and shouldn't be flushed.

We've experienced a 57 percent growth in member organizations since making our organizational shift. And we're proud to count manufacturers, household name brands, news agencies, fellow trade associations, and wastewater agencies among our collaborative cohort as we envision an informed public who always knows and practices what goes where.

And we've been busy earning coverage on related, newsworthy issues that affect consumers on topics that they care about, including:

- 13 press releases with broad pickup
- Nearly 400 press stories resulting in
- Approximately 1,000 shares on Facebook and
- More than 500 shares on Twitter

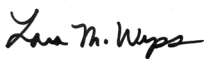
And we've been busy creating our own media, too, including:

- 8 infographics available in both English and Spanish
- Educational activity & enrichment sheets, including an original storybook with companion coloring book, also in both English and Spanish
- Blog posts
- A new website

These materials haven't just been created in a vacuum, they each receive promotional support from our social media strategy that's working to cultivate a vibrant community of actively engaged participants in social forums that are responsive, encouraging, and relatable, with paid media campaign metrics and growing followership metrics that show we're meeting our goals to tell our story effectively, efficiently, and memorably.

We're excited by all the opportunities ahead and thank you for leaning in to help make it all possible for consumers. With your help, we're RFA strong!

Regards,



Lara Wyss,  
President, Responsible Flushing Alliance  
1143 Martin Luther King Jr. Way  
Seattle, WA 98122



**DO NOT FLUSH**

Be sure to always look for the Do Not Flush symbol on wipes packaging for proper disposal instructions. Remember, when in doubt, throw it out.



Don't feed the Clog Monster! Be sure to always look for the Do Not Flush symbol on wipes before deciding whether or not to flush them.

# OUR TIMELINE AT-A-GLANCE



**July 27, 2020**

The Responsible Flushing Alliance (RFA) PR committee forms an independent and standalone 501(c)(6) trade association dedicated to consumer education.



**August 1, 2020**

RFA hires its first president, Lara Wyss, to spearhead its #FlushSmart consumer education campaign.



**Fall 2020**

Modernizes website and refreshes to new [www.flushsmart.org](http://www.flushsmart.org) site with downloadable educational materials, infographics, news stories, and a blog.



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The Responsible Flushing Alliance enthusiastically welcomed ANDRITZ nonwovens division and DUDE Products as its newest Board of Directors members. The addition of these two innovators to the organization brings in their distinct expertise and perspectives on the issue of responsible flushing and expands the Alliance's efforts to educate consumers on smart flushing habits.



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Oregon Gov. Kate Brown signed into law House Bill 2344, requiring manufacturers of personal care and household wipes with "Do Not Flush" for those wipes that are not intended for disposal in the toilet. The RFA issued a press release in support of the legislation



**December 9, 2020**

The Clog Monster debuts with the launch of a paid media campaign on Facebook <https://fb.watch/acD8IE7032/>. In just one month the Clog Monster post outperforms Facebook's benchmark for CTR (click through rate) by two times the average amount. The high levels of response are an indication that we are reaching receptive audiences with the right messaging.



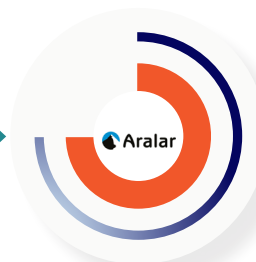
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**October 6, 2021**

California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed AB 818 by Assembly Member Richard Bloom into law, requiring all packaging for diaper wipes, cleaning wipes, and cosmetic wipes to display clear "Do Not Flush" warnings.



**October 18, 2021**

RFA Welcomes Papel Aralar S.A. to its Coalition of members. The global paper company brings its proven commitment to environmental preservation and social responsibility to the Responsible Flushing Alliance as the organization accelerates its consumer education campaign.

## July 27, 2020 –

The Responsible Flushing Alliance (RFA) PR committee forms an independent and standalone 501(c)(6) trade association dedicated to consumer education. Founding Board Member companies include:

- Albaad
- Essity
- First Quality
- Glatfelter
- Johnson & Johnson
- Kelheim Fibres GmbH
- Kimberly-Clark
- Nehemiah Manufacturing
- Nice-Pak and PDI
- Procter & Gamble
- Rockline Industries
- Sellars Nonwovens
- Suominen Corporation



## August 1, 2020 –

RFA hires its first president, Lara Wyss, to spearhead its #FlushSmart consumer education campaign.

*“I’m excited to take the lead for the Responsible Flushing Alliance as we work to raise awareness and education about how proper flushing contributes to a healthier home and office, safe environment and well-maintained sewer systems,” Wyss said. “Targeted and collaborative public education about what not to flush will lead to reduced wastewater costs.”*



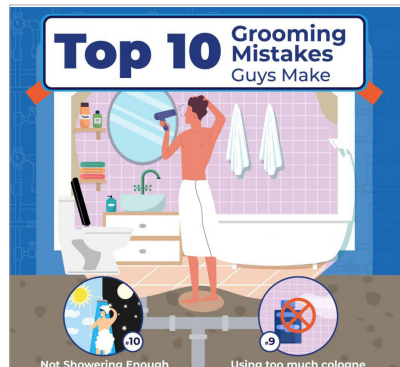
**Lara Wyss**

RFA President

## Fall 2020 –

Modernizes website and refreshes to new [www.flushsmart.org](http://www.flushsmart.org) site with downloadable educational materials, infographics, news stories, and a blog.

### Infographics



### Educational materials

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Sea Creatures or School-of-Fish Mobile

AGE RANGE: Grades 3–5

**PREPARATION:**  
Recycle empty cardboard tubes from toilet paper and paper towel rolls. Collect them in advance and encourage children to bring them in from home.

**MATERIALS:**

- Cardboard toilet paper tubes (or paper towel tubes, cut down to size)
- Paper plates (recyclable or compostable if possible)
- Do Not Flush symbol (printable sheet attached)
- Acrylic paints and paint brushes
- Colored construction paper, cardboard scraps or foam sheets
- Gift-wrapping paper scraps
- Sequins (optional)
- Tissue paper or party streamers
- Pencil, black marker, glitter pens
- Scissors, single-hole punch and glue
- String, yarn and paperclips
- Wire hangers, recycled paper towel tubes, or sticks for mobile base
- Ruler (for Octopus extension)

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Flatten your toilet roll tube.
- Cut the corners on one end to make a rounded shape for the fish's head.
- On the other end, cut out a triangle to make the tail.
- Use the triangle cut-out to make fins and tape them in place.
- Paint your fish and let it dry.
- Decorate it with colorful scraps of wrapping paper, tissue and/or party streamers.
- Make fish scales with tissue or wrapping paper scraps (optional).
- Make a pattern and glue them on, overlapping as you go.
- Make "googly eyes" with white paper and a marker. (No plastic required) Glue them onto each side of the face. Draw a mouth and gills.
- Add some crazy shark or piranha teeth – or whatever you like!
- Cut out the two Do Not Flush symbols. Glue one onto a paper plate and cut it out. Now glue the second copy onto the back side. Punch out a hole at the top and thread it with yarn or string.

DO NOT FLUSH

DO NOT POUR FAT, Oils and Grease down the drain.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### "Flush Smart" Word Search

Find and circle all of the words in the list below. Think before you flush!

These things do **NOT** belong in the toilet:

toys	food	trash
mask	frog	duck
straw	diaper	underwear

W x f p d s c n e d  
s t r a w b m e n e  
d v o b r i a u f m  
f x g t o y s g j d  
o i m p z e l t i c  
d i a p e r m r w k  
u n d e r w e a r n  
k y m y e p g s f e  
n b n j m e w h d q

Look for the Do Not Flush symbol and never flush disposable wipes or trash down the toilet.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Maze Challenge

1. Trace a clear path through the drain pipes to the sewer below.  
2. Then mark each clog with an X to blast it away!

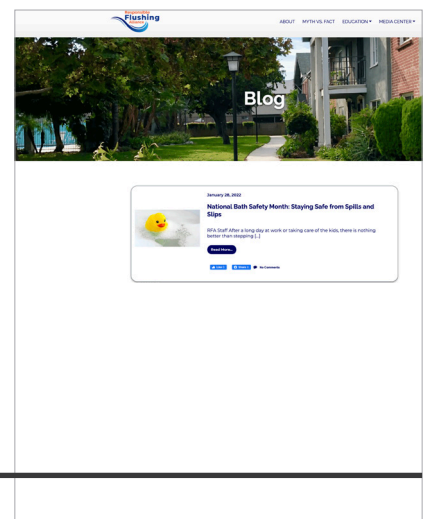
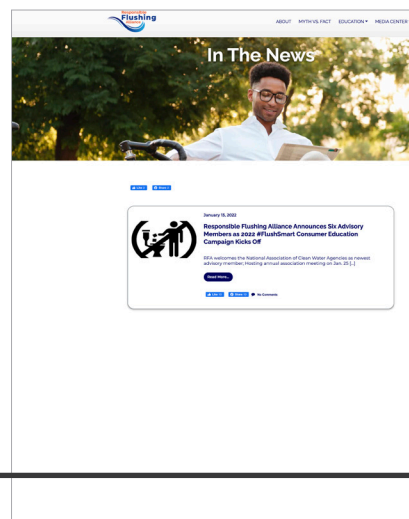
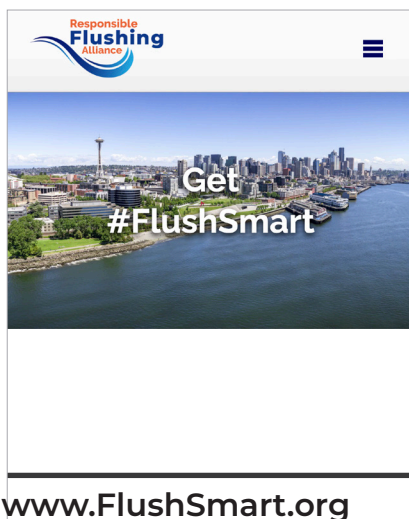
Can you defeat the Clog Monster?

Clogs in pipes can cause sewage backups (yuck!) and lead to pollution in our rivers and streams.

Stop clogs before they happen! Look for the Do Not Flush symbol and never flush disposable wipes or trash down the toilet.

DO NOT FLUSH

### Website materials





Blogs

## Not Sure What to Flush? California Now Has a Label for That.

**Overview**

By RFA Staff

California can now put another arrow in its quiver in its fight to protect the environment and state infrastructure: a new law that educates consumers on what can and cannot be flushed down the toilet. Specifically, the new legislation, supported by both environmental advocates and industry, establishes a disposal labeling requirement for wipe manufacturers to even more prominently label their products with "Do Not Flush" messaging.

The timing couldn't be better. Household use of non-flushable wipes spiked as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic – but so did sewage clogs when toilet paper shortages and the need for enhanced cleaning options led to the increased flushing of non-flushable alternatives – and it cost California taxpayers.

In 2019, non-flushable wipes resulted in an estimated \$47 million in additional operating costs for utilities in California, according to NACWA. This number is all the more striking when one considers the additional costs from all other materials that cause clogs and backups.

You'd think knowing what to flush down your toilet would be intuitive. Unfortunately, it's not. As wastewater professionals, industry and policymakers come together to design public awareness and education programs around smart flushing habits, the focus must be on changing behaviors for the long-term.

Search

**Recent Posts**

National Bath Safety Month: Staying Safe from Spills and Slips

Responsible Flushing Alliance Announces Six Advisory Members as 2022 #FlushSmart Consumer Education Campaign Kicks Off

The History of Toilets: A Brief Run Down

**Archives**

## Wipes: Your Summer Sidekick

**Overview**

By RFA Staff Writer

During these dog days of summer, and especially after a year indoors, people everywhere are treating this summer like it is the first one ever... planning road trips, beach days, and camping adventures to make up for time lost during the pandemic. These activities also mean bringing in the dirt and messiness that come from all that activity and fun in the sun.

Summertime activities are fun, of course, but clean up doesn't have to be a major drag. Wipes can help you stay prepared in every summer situation. From baby wipes to sanitizing wipes – even sunscreen wipes – there is a wipe for every mess and situation that comes your way.

We all know it's important to wear sunscreen or bug spray when outdoors, but these can leave hands sticky and greasy, which isn't a great combo when mixed with dirt or sand. Luckily, this is no match for hand cleaning wipes!

Keeping sanitizing wipes in the trunk or glovebox is perfect for cleaning up toys and outdoor

Search

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**Archives**

News Stories

## To flush or not to flush?

**H<sub>2</sub>O GLOBAL NEWS**

fields and weighed over three hundred tons.

RFA estimates that fatbergs cost the U.S. economy around one billion dollars every year. But the impacts go beyond the obvious. Sewer clogs place added strain on the United States' 800,000 miles of aging sewer pipes, increasing the chances of overflows.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, there are up to 75,000 sewer overflow incidents every year in the U.S., dumping about 850 billion gallons of raw sewage into waterways.

Clearly, what you throw in the loo matters. Yet, becoming flush smart is not always straightforward.

**"A giant fatberg discovered in Birmingham, England, was the size of three football fields and weighed over three hundred tons!"**

**To flush or not to flush?**

Many items can cause blockages, but when it comes to sewer clog culprits – wet wipes reign supreme.

Wipes make clean-up jobs much easier (just ask any parent!) but their durability also means they cause problems down the pipe. For this reason, most of them are labelled "Do Not

However, some companies have designed flushable alternatives, a classification causing a little confusion.

Some waste water utilities claim flushable wipes still cause blockages, and that manufacturers are not conducting rigorous testing.

Manufacturers disagree. The Association of the Nonwoven Fabrics Industry (INDA) say their test results provide scientific evidence that these wipes are safe for sewer and septic systems.

The problem is that once wipes go down the drain it is difficult to distinguish between non-flushable and flushable varieties. However, RFA points to forensic analysis that helps clear the air.

A study commissioned by the NYC Law Department in 2016, titled, Forensic Evaluation of Non-Dispersibles, identified flushed products found at two pump station inlet screens at Ward Island, one from the Bronx and one from Manhattan. The study found that 98% of the contents were non-flushable products such as baby wipes, hygiene products, and paper, with the remainder labelled "flushable".

Another forensic study conducted at McMillan Pump Station, Jacksonville, Florida, in 2019, found that just 0.9% of the contents were made up of flushable items.

Let's face it, toilets aren't exactly a conversation starter; we do our business and then try not to think about it until the next time nature calls.

While we tend to "flush and forget" – that shouldn't be an excuse to treat toilets like trash bags.

In all likelihood you have encountered a "Do Not Flush" label before, and there is a good reason why. Non-flushable products cause sewer clogs which can result in major economic and environmental costs.

Part of the problem is that many products are not clearly labelled, and there is disinformation around what is, and is not, flushable. Some consumers are simply not

The Responsible Flushing Alliance (RFA) is an independent, non-profit trade association that strives to change this. RFA is committed to educating consumers about responsible and smart flushing habits to help reduce damage to sewage systems.

**Why the fuss?**

Non-flushable items, such as wipes, hygiene products, paper and nappies, are the leading cause of sewer clogs and fatbergs.

Never heard of a fatberg? They are giant cement-like masses that form in sewers when oil, grease and fat combine with non-biodegradable items. A giant fatberg discovered in May this year in

**NONWOVENS INDUSTRY 1975**

**California Law to Require Clear Do Not Flush Labeling on Non-Flushable Wipes**

Bill also requires public education on proper wipes disposal 10.07.21

California Governor Gavin Newsom has signed AB 818 by Assembly Member Richard Bloom into law, requiring all packaging for diaper wipes, cleaning wipes and cosmetic wipes to display clear "Do Not Flush" warnings. The bill is the result of a three-year effort between representatives from wastewater and product stewardship groups and wipes manufacturers to address an urgent pollution problem that has plagued public wastewater infrastructure. The legislation establishes disposal labeling requirements for wet wipes packaging and requires manufacturers of wipes to educate the public on the impacts of flushing wipes improperly.

**#FlushSmart** is the Responsible Flushing Alliance's campaign to empower consumers to distinguish categories of wipes that should not be flushed down the toilet and how to recognize the "Do Not Flush" symbol, with the goal of improving disposal behavior to help reduce damage to California's sewage systems caused by products and materials not designed to be flushed.

"This is a major step forward in the wastewater industry's fight to keep wipes intended for the trash can out of our public sewer systems" says Jessica Gauger, Director of Legislative Advocacy and Public Affairs for CASA, a statewide trade association representing public wastewater agencies. "Through the leadership of Assembly Member Bloom, the wipes industry has taken a major step forward in addressing consumer confusion about improper disposal of these products which has been a major contributor to debris in our systems. Working collaboratively with industry stakeholders we have found a solution to provide clarity to consumers, which we are hopeful will result in a decrease in wipes being flushed."

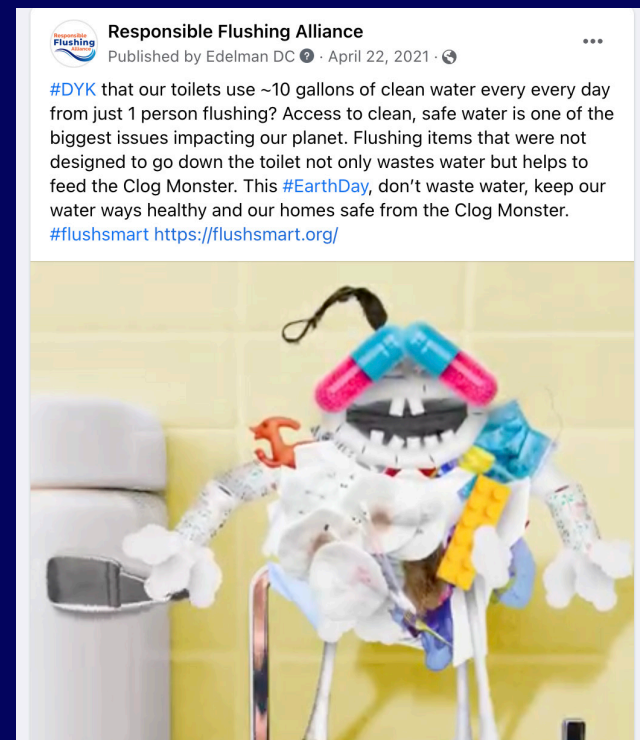
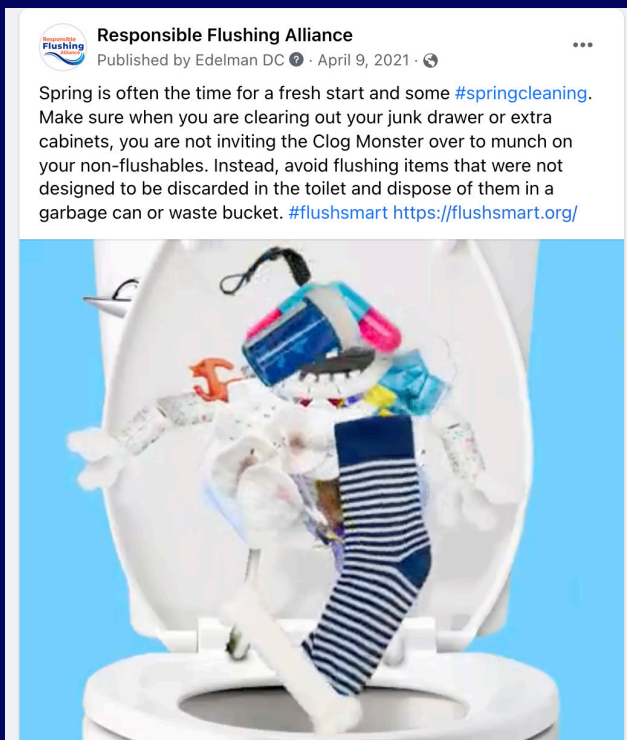
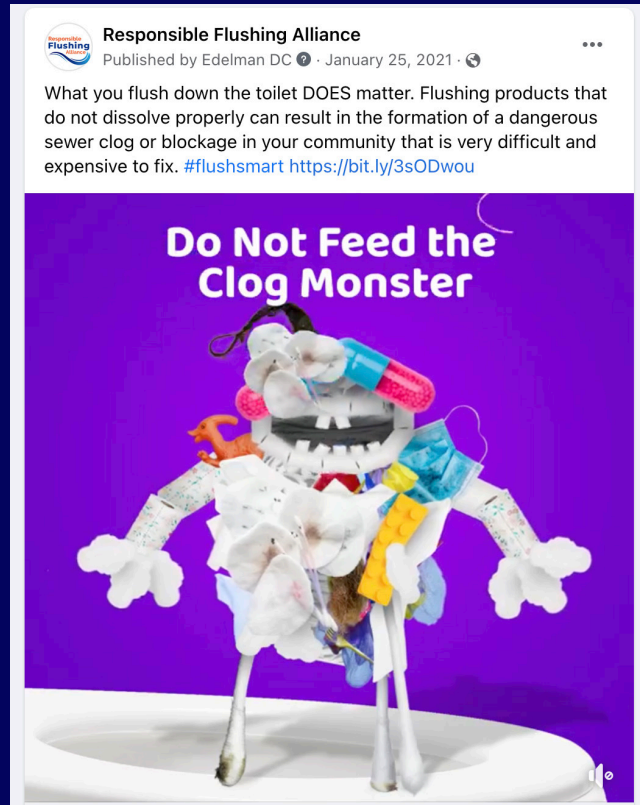
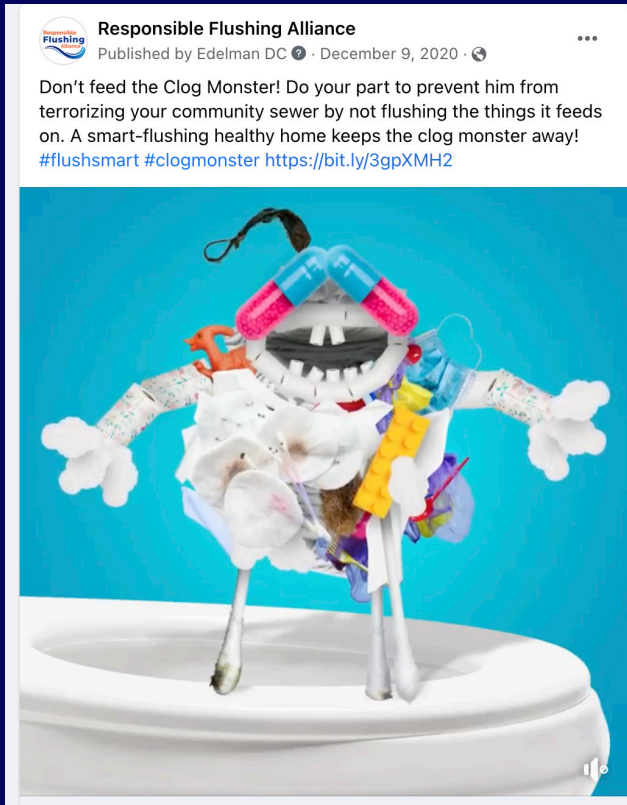
"With AB 818, the wipes industry is taking responsibility for the labeling necessary for consumers to properly dispose of their products," says Heidi Sanborn with the National Stewardship Action Council, a national nonprofit that promotes product stewardship and circular economy policy. She notes that in addition to the package labeling requirements, a key provision of AB 818 requires the manufacturers of wipes not only educate the public through the labeling, but also conduct public outreach campaigns to explain the proper disposal of their products and the effects of improperly flushing them.

Lara Wyss, president of the Responsible Flushing Alliance, a 501(c)(6) created by the wipes industry to promote responsible consumer disposal habits, also lauded the passage of AB 818.

"Public awareness and education around smart flushing habits is the key to changing behaviors," Wyss indicated that this is the beginning of a new era of collaboration between the wastewater sector and wipes manufacturers noting, "Protecting public infrastructure and the environment is a high priority for our alliance."

## December 9, 2020 –

The Clog Monster debuts with the launch of a paid media campaign on Facebook ([click here to watch](#)). In just one month the Clog Monster post outperforms Facebook’s benchmark for CTR (click through rate) by two times the average amount. The high levels of response are an indication that we are reaching receptive audiences with the right messaging.



## June 14, 2021 –

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*“Our goal is to increase public awareness around how smart flushing habits lead to healthier homes and communities. Proper labeling is critical in educating consumers to recognize the difference between flushable and non-flushable products.”*



## June 19, 2021 –

The Responsible Flushing Alliance enthusiastically welcomed ANDRITZ nonwovens division and DUDE Products as its newest Board of Directors members. The addition of these two innovators to the organization brings in their distinct expertise and perspectives on the issue of responsible flushing and expands the Alliance’s efforts to educate consumers on smart flushing habits.

*“ANDRITZ is a leading company in the design and manufacture of nonwoven lines, serving the wipes industry, so sustainability has always been an integrated part of our corporate policy,” said Andreas Lukas, Senior Vice President of ANDRITZ Nonwoven. “*

*“Our mission is to keep having fun, build great products, and support consumers anyway we can, which is why we’re excited to join the Responsible Flushing Alliance and work with the industry on the #FlushSmart educational campaign,” said Sean Riley, Chief Executive Dude and President, DUDE Products.*





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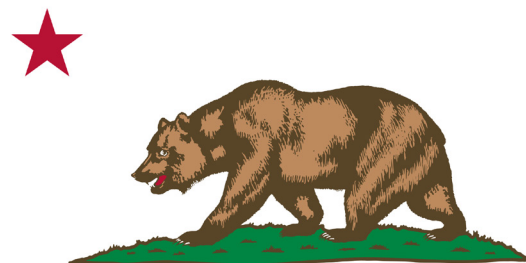
*“Prominent disposal labeling is essential in educating consumers on flushable versus non-flushable products, and we are pleased this legislation has passed in Illinois,” said Lara Wyss, president of the Responsible Flushing Alliance. “Through our #FlushSmart consumer education initiatives, the Responsible Flushing Alliance advocates for the same public awareness around smart flushing habits that is championed in this legislation. Clear labeling is a critical step in helping consumers practice responsible flushing habits, which in turn leads to healthier homes and communities for all of us.”*



## October 6, 2021

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**CALIFORNIA REPUBLIC**

## October 18, 2021 –

RFA Welcomes Papel Aralar S.A. to its Coalition of members. The global paper company brings its proven commitment to environmental preservation and social responsibility to the Responsible Flushing Alliance as the organization accelerates its consumer education campaign.

*“We are delighted to become a member of the Responsible Flushing Alliance, an organization that perfectly aligns with the values of our company in ensuring that only those products that are truly biodegradable and flushable are discarded through our water infrastructure”, says Senen Amunarriz, managing director of Aralar.*

# JOIN US!

We hope you can see the great progress we’ve made during 2021 preparing our #FlushSmart consumer education and outreach campaign.

Afterall, California’s new labeling law for wet wipes also requires consumer education and specifically calls out six components:

1. Comprehensive statewide consumer education and outreach campaign. Materials must be in both English and Spanish
2. Multimedia campaign to promote consumer awareness with the Do Not Flush symbol
3. Patriate in a sewage collection study
4. Consumer opinion surveys assessing behaviors and awareness regarding disposal of non-flushable wipes (for 5 years to measure effectiveness)
5. Provide wastewater agencies with consumer education messaging for the Do Not Flush

symbol and label notice

6. Report to the Senate Committees on an annual basis on campaign results; submit written annual report for posting on the state website.

We’ve spent the last 18 months building a strong infrastructure so that we can make it easy for wipes manufacturers to have a “plug-and-play” resource to buy into rather than creating their own programs from scratch. Our program is structured so that members pay a percentage of the overall campaign budget, and we do all the rest.

### About Responsible Flushing Alliance

The Responsible Flushing Alliance (RFA) is a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization dedicated to consumer education focused on what not to flush. RFA’s goal is to change consumer behavior to help reduce damage to our nation’s sewage systems caused by objects and materials not designed to be flushed.

## Responsible Flushing Alliance Contributing Members

Albaad Inc., ANDRITZ Group – Nonwoven Division, DUDE Products, Essity, First Quality, Glatfelter, Johnson & Johnson, Kelheim Fibres, Kimberly-Clark Corporation, Nehemiah Manufacturing, Nice-Pak, Papel Aralar S.A., Procter & Gamble, Rockline Industries, Sellars Nonwovens, and Suominen Corp.

## Responsible Flushing Alliance Advisory Members

California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA), National Stewardship Action Council (NSAC), National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA), H2O Global News, Toilet Board Coalition, Baby and Adult Hygiene Products (BAHP)

# WHY RFA?



Wipes help families do it all. Whether it's a quick cleanup or care that's being handled, their ease can't be beat. But we know it's not always the intended trash can where they end up. And that that choice has an impact that can extend far beyond that moment.

At the Responsible Flushing Alliance, and we know that wipes help keep our families and our homes healthy and clean. And we know the care and precision that goes into ideating and crafting them—long before they do the work to help us clean and sanitize.

But once they've done their intended job, many wipes not designed for drain waste plans are being flushed. And when combined with fats, oils, and greases in our aging sewer infrastructure, massive clogs develop that sap municipal resources.

The forensic analysis of these clogs show intact wipes being removed whenever they develop, showing the hand of consumer choice at work in this mounting problem.

That's where the Responsible Flushing Alliance can help. Who will speak with and to consumers directly to provide education about what to flush and what to trash?

We can.

We're a non-profit trade association dedicated to reaching consumers through smart research, education and outreach through our "Flush Smart" campaign.

We work in step with wastewater partners to determine materials to help their constituents get smarter about their flushes. And we keep our industry partners in compliance with changing state guidance so that everyone can be water-wise not only at the tap but #FlushSmart every time the lid goes down.

We're the Responsible Flushing Alliance – helping you #FlushSmart.



[www.FlushSmart.org](http://www.FlushSmart.org)