What's Going Down the Drain in California?

Municipalities up and down the state have been surprised—and challenged by—the amount and variety of items that turn up in their wastewater systems. Let’s take a behind-the-drains look at some of the most surprising things Californians are flushing or dumping that have ended up in catch basins and treatments plants across the state.

In a 2019 report, NACWA estimated that wipes result in nearly $10 million a year in additional operating costs in the collection systems of California. Adding fats, oils, greases down in-home drains combined with wipes is a catastrophic addition that we can and must do better to avoid. Keeping our homes and communities cleaner and safer is impossible without it.

So what can you do? Always look for the “Do Not Flush” symbol on wipes packaging for proper disposal instructions. If you see it, always throw it in the trash, not the toilet.

Baby wipes, makeup wipes and hard surface cleaning wipes are made with plastics that don’t break down in water and can cause damage to home and municipal sewage systems.

Remember, none of these should end up in your storm drains or water treatment plants—only we can make the difference, California!