

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4884

To require that all new washing machines sold or offered for sale in the United States contain a microfiber filtration system, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 31, 2024

Mr. MERKLEY introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To require that all new washing machines sold or offered for sale in the United States contain a microfiber filtration system, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Fighting Fibers Act
5 of 2024”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITION OF ADMINISTRATOR.**

7 In this Act, the term “Administrator” means the Ad-
8 ministrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

9 **SEC. 3. MICROFIBER FILTRATION IN WASHING MACHINES.**

10 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1 (1) MICROFIBER FILTRATION SYSTEM.—The
 2 term “microfiber filtration system” means a filtra-
 3 tion unit for a washing machine that is—

4 (A) active across all washing cycles; and

5 (B)(i) integrated into the washing machine
 6 design as a built-in filter; or

7 (ii)(I) included as an in-line filter; and

8 (II) packaged, sold, and installed with the
 9 washing machine.

10 (2) WASHING MACHINE.—

11 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “washing
 12 machine” means a machine designed and used
 13 for washing clothes and linen.

14 (B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “washing ma-
 15 chine” includes residential and commercial
 16 washing machines.

17 (b) MICROFIBER FILTRATION.—The Administrator,
 18 jointly with the Secretary of Energy, shall ensure that,
 19 beginning on January 1, 2030, no new washing machine
 20 is sold or offered for sale in the United States unless the
 21 washing machine meets the following requirements:

22 (1) Contains a microfiber filtration system—

23 (A) with a mesh size of not greater than
 24 100 micrometers; or

1 (B) that meets another standard that is
2 determined by the Administrator, jointly with
3 the Secretary of Energy, in a rulemaking under
4 subsection (c) to provide equal or greater effi-
5 cacy in reducing microfiber pollution as com-
6 pared to a microfiber filtration system with a
7 mesh size of not greater than 100 micrometers.

8 (2) Bears a conspicuous label that is visible to
9 the consumer, in the form of a sticker or any other
10 label type, that includes—

11 (A) the following statement: “Notice: This
12 washing machine contains a filter to capture
13 microfibers. Check filter regularly and dispose
14 of captured lint in a waste bin.”; or

15 (B) a similar label as determined by the
16 Administrator, jointly with the Secretary of En-
17 ergy, in a rulemaking under subsection (c).

18 (3) Such other requirements or standards as
19 the Administrator, jointly with the Secretary of En-
20 ergy, may require through a rulemaking under sub-
21 section (c).

22 (c) RULEMAKING.—The Administrator, jointly with
23 the Secretary of Energy, may promulgate regulations to
24 carry out this section.

25 (d) CIVIL PENALTIES.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Any person that violates the
2 requirements of this section shall be assessed a civil
3 penalty by the Administrator of—

4 (A) in the case of a first violation, not
5 more than \$10,000; and

6 (B) in the case of each subsequent viola-
7 tion, \$30,000.

8 (2) CUMULATIVE REMEDIES.—The remedies
9 provided in this section are in addition to any other
10 remedy available under any other law.

11 (e) SAVINGS PROVISION.—Nothing in this section im-
12 pairs or impedes any other right, cause of action, claim,
13 or defense available under any other law.

14 **SEC. 4. MICROFIBER RESEARCH AND DIRECTIVES.**

15 (a) DEFINITION OF MICROFIBER.—In this section,
16 the term “microfiber” means a synthetic or natural textile
17 fiber that is less than 5 millimeters in length.

18 (b) STUDY.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, in con-
20 sultation with the heads of other Federal depart-
21 ments and agencies as the Administrator determines
22 to be necessary, shall carry out a nationwide study
23 on—

1 (A) the presence of, sources of, and path-
2 ways used by microfibers in the human body
3 and the environment;

4 (B) whether the presence of microfibers in
5 the human body and the environment has a
6 toxic effect on human health and the environ-
7 ment; and

8 (C) whether the presence of microfibers in
9 the human body and the environment has an
10 inequitable impact on environmental justice
11 communities, as determined by the Adminis-
12 trator.

13 (2) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the
14 date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator
15 shall submit to Congress, and make publicly avail-
16 able, a report that describes the results of the study
17 under paragraph (1).

○