

Ban of Microbeads in Personal Care Products Considered

In response to appeals by environmental organizations to expedite the banning of microbeads in cosmetics, the EPA has indicated that it will soon announce that microbeads are not allowed to be added in cosmetic and personal care products. The EPA has invited cosmetic enterprises, the Ministry of Health and Welfare and the Ministry of Economic Affairs to discuss the issue. The EPA estimates that controls will be announced in 2017.

The issue of plastic microbeads has been a hot one internationally in recent years, with attention focusing on restricting the amounts of microbeads in cosmetic and personal care products. The EPA has examined international trends and has come up with a methodology and timetable for controlling microbeads in cosmetics sold in Taiwan. During a meeting with representatives from cosmetic and personal care product enterprises on 20 June, the EPA promised to give the enterprises an adequate grace period to adjust to the new regime.

The EPA will continue to examine the issue along with all stakeholders and ask related enterprises to come into line with government policy. On 29 June 2016, the EPA invited officials from the Ministry of Health and Welfare and the Ministry of Economic Affairs to discuss the control measures. The EPA aims to hasten the lawmaking process and expects that related controls will be announced in 2017.

Since a large proportion of personal care products consumed in Taiwan are imported, any controls on them will touch upon international trade agreements. Being a member of the World Trade Organization, Taiwan is obliged to be clear and transparent about regulatory changes and give the WTO at least 60-day notice. The EPA will carefully take into account the opinions of stakeholders at home – through public hearings and discussion meetings – and also of other WTO members.

The EPA is again urging all enterprises to begin reducing the amounts of microbeads in their products, such as by substituting more eco-friendly substances for them. The EPA is also calling on members of the public to consume less microbead-containing products to protect the environment.

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