

**PRESS RELEASE, FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, WEDNESDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> November**

## **Charity urges law for simple solution to cut down plastic pollution**

- The Marine Conservation Society, joined by the National Federation of Womens' Institutes, hands in petition to Downing Street with over 44,000 signatures in support of washing machine filters
- Filters fitted inside washing machines can reduce the amount of plastic microfibres released into wastewater by up to 90%

The Marine Conservation Society, the UK's leading marine charity, and its supporters are calling on the UK Government to help stop the flow of plastic fibres entering the ocean by enforcing a simple solution: washing machine filters.

On Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November, the Marine Conservation Society handed in its petition for washing machine manufacturers to be required, by law, to include microfibre filters in all washing machines from 2024, surmounting 44,000 signatures.

Filters fitted inside washing machines can reduce the amount of plastic microfibres released into wastewater by up to 90%.

Microfibres (fibres less than 5mm) from synthetic textiles are contributing to the global plastic crisis. With each laundry cycle, up to 700,000 of these microfibres find their way into our water systems. In the UK alone, at least 9.4 trillion fibres could be released into the environment in just one week, a substantial portion of which ultimately reaches our seas.

Alberto Costa MP has previously introduced the Microplastic Filters (Washing Machines) Bill, which would require all new washing machines on sale in the UK to be fitted with a microplastic fibre capture filter from 2025. The Bill is supported by a number of cross-party MPs, washing machine filter manufacturers and members of the *All-Party Parliamentary Group on Microplastics*, including the National Federation of Womens' Institutes.

**Laura Foster, Head of Clean Seas at the Marine Conservation Society**, said, "Microfibre catching technology must be implemented as soon as possible to have the biggest and most immediate impact on microplastic pollution.

“We know microfibres from our clothes are one of the biggest contributors to microplastic pollution in our seas. They have dire consequences for marine life – causing digestive problems, hindering nutrient absorption, and introducing toxins into the ecosystem. We have industry and public support; we just need the UK Government to push forward with this Bill.”

Since 2022, Beko-Grundig have shared the patent for their world’s first integrated FiberCatcher® technology washing machine. Despite allowing other brands to adopt this innovation, the response has been slow.

Fabrics such as polyester, nylon and acrylic are created using plastic fibres; with every wash and wear they shed from our clothes, ending up in the environment and the ocean. Once in the ocean, microfibres can be eaten by marine animals which mistake the tiny fibres for food and can be passed up the food chain. A recent study showed 67% of UK sharks contain microplastics and fibres.

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### **Press contact**

Evie Martin, Media Relations Manager: [evie.martin@mcsuk.org](mailto:evie.martin@mcsuk.org) / 07579 814217

### **Images**

Please find a selection of [images here](#), including from the petition hand in

### **Notes to editors**

[EU Lobbying Document Final March 2023.pdf](#)

The [Marine Conservation Society](#) is the UK’s leading ocean charity, fighting for cleaner, better-protected, healthier seas. The charity works to highlight the importance of our ocean, and the life within it, through working with government, industry and education, to take action to restore and protect the marine environment.