

May 1, 2024

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

The undersigned organizations write in strong support of the Ban Water Beads Act (H.R. 6468), a bill that would direct the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to enforce a ban on toys and similar products containing water beads. This bill is vital to help parents and caregivers keep their babies and children safe, and protect them from the risk of serious injury and death linked to these dangerous products.

Water beads are colorful gel balls that expand in water. They are commonly marketed as safe, eco-friendly, and biodegradable sensory toys, as well as sensory aids for older children and children with disabilities. They are sold in packages by the thousands that look like cupcake sprinkles or candy, and can be accidentally swallowed or inserted into the ear or nose by children. Despite careful handling, adult supervision, adherence to age recommendations, and thorough clean-up, the tiny beads can still scatter, roll away, and become concealed under furniture, within baseboards, or in carpet fibers. Unbeknownst to caregivers, a baby or child can find one, and swallow it, even months or years after someone has last played with the beads.

Once inside a child's body and wet, water beads can grow to the size of a marble or a golf ball and cause severe – even fatal – health issues like intestinal obstruction if swallowed, lung damage if inhaled, or hearing loss if put in the ear. Nearly 7,000 water bead-related ingestion injuries were treated in U.S. emergency departments from 2018 through 2022, according to the CPSC, and this is almost certainly an undercount. Dogs, cats, and other pets might also find and swallow the beads, and suffer health complications.

The CPSC has tested a number of water bead products for acrylamide, a known carcinogen that can be toxic to the nervous system, reproductive system, and brain. In most samples, the chemical was detected, and two of the products released “concerning levels” of acrylamide.

Amid mounting pressure, some retailers and online platforms, including Amazon, Walmart, and Target, recently changed their policies on water beads and no longer allow the sale of these products if marketed for children. While commendable, some of these policies are stronger than others, and some companies haven't taken any action at all, allowing hazardous water beads to remain on the market.

We support H.R. 6468 because it is crucial for lawmakers to set clear rules in the marketplace when safety is at stake. The bill would specifically protect families from harm by banning water bead products that are designed, intended, or marketed as toys, educational materials, or art

materials. It would require urgent action by the CPSC and protect children far faster than the agency can under its current authority, where a similar prohibition initiated by the agency without a congressional mandate would require years of unnecessary research and analysis – all while infants and children remain at risk.

We thank you for your consideration of H.R. 6468 and encourage you to reach out to Congressman Pallone's office to cosponsor the bill. Passing the Ban Water Beads Act is the best way to protect children nationwide and help parents avoid a tragedy in their family.

Sincerely,

**National Organizations:**

American Academy of Pediatrics  
Behavioral Health Services North, Inc.  
Center for Pet Safety  
Consumer Federation of America  
Consumer Reports  
Kids In Danger  
National Center for Health Research  
North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition  
PediMom LLC  
Public Citizen  
Reese's Purpose  
Safe Infant Sleep  
Safe Kids Worldwide  
That Water Bead Lady  
U.S. Public Interest Research Group

**State and Local Organizations:**

Adirondack Safe Kids  
Apache Tribe of Oklahoma - Safe Kids Naisha  
Cabarrus County Partnership for Children  
Families and Communities Together (FACT)  
Healthy Communities  
Mary Lanning Healthcare / Safe Kids South Central  
Penn State Health, Milton S. Hershey Medical Center  
Safe Kids Alabama  
Safe Kids Alaska State Coalition, Providence AK Medical Center  
Safe Kids Athens  
Safe Kids Baltimore  
Safe Kids Bergen

Safe Kids Bootheel  
Safe Kids Central California  
Safe Kids Chester County Coalition  
Safe Kids Chicago  
Safe Kids Colorado Springs  
Safe Kids Connecticut  
Safe Kids Cumberland Valley  
Safe Kids Fayette County  
Safe Kids Finney County  
Safe Kids Fox Valley  
Safe Kids Grand Forks - Altru Health System  
Safe Kids Greater Des Moines  
Safe Kids Greater Sacramento  
Safe Kids Greater Tampa  
Safe Kids Guilford County  
Safe Kids Gwinnett  
Safe Kids Hawaii and Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition  
Safe Kids Houston County  
Safe Kids Kansas  
Safe Kids Los Angeles  
Safe Kids Lower Columbia  
Safe Kids Mahoning Valley  
Safe Kids Middlesex County/RWJUH  
Safe Kids Montgomery-Elk  
Safe Kids NC, Halifax County Coalition  
Safe Kids Northwest Missouri  
Safe Kids Ohio  
Safe Kids Pee Dee/Coastal Led by McLeod Health  
Safe Kids Pennsylvania  
Safe Kids Riverbend Coalition  
Safe Kids Rutherford Polk  
Safe Kids San Benito County  
Safe Kids San Diego  
Safe Kids Stanislaus  
Safe Kids Summit County  
Safe Kids SWFL  
Safe Kids Toombs  
Safe Kids Tulsa Area  
Safe Kids Utah  
Safe Kids Washoe County/ Renown Health

Safe Kids Wisconsin and Safe Kids Southeast Wisconsin  
Southern Tier Health Care System, Inc  
SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital/Safe Kids St. Louis  
Stanislaus Regional Transit Authority  
Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare/Safe Kids Big Bend  
Trinity Health Muskegon  
Valley Children's Healthcare  
Winnebago County Safe Kids Coalition