

NEWS RELEASE

Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: October 29, 2024

Contact: Greta Johnson
Director of Communications and Assistant Chief of Staff
Office of County Executive Shapiro
ExecutivePress@summitoh.net
330-643-2656

A plea from Summit County’s wastewater staff: Don’t flush your wipes!

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO—Staff at Summit County’s Department of Sanitary Sewer Services (DSSS) are urging customers to throw away, not flush, their disposable wipes and other household waste items. Just like in communities across the nation, disposable wipes have been causing problems in Summit County. Wipes — used for changing diapers, personal hygiene, housecleaning, and more — cause major problems when flushed down toilets. Though many of these products are labeled “flushable” or “septic safe,” they are absolutely not. The same goes for facial tissues, baby wipes, paper towels and other products.

“We have a very simple request for our sewer customers: don’t flush your wipes or any other item except toilet paper! Flushing wipes and other waste items will cause damage to our sewer infrastructure and may cause costly damage to the pipes in your home or business. Please throw your wipes in the trash, not the toilet!” said County Executive Ilene Shapiro.

Because they do not break down like toilet paper, disposable wipes clog homeowner and municipal sewer pipes, put stress on community wastewater collection and treatment equipment, and cause counties and cities to spend thousands on premature equipment repair and replacement. Wipes snag on any imperfection in sewer pipes, catch passing debris and grease, and create a “ball” that will grow to plug the pipe. They also get drawn into sewer-line and wastewater treatment plant pumps, leading to clogs and damage. In a worst-case scenario, flushing wipes and other products clogs lateral lines in residents’ homes or businesses, leading to costly and destructive sewage backups.

“Our team continues to see more and more clogs and backups caused by disposable wipes and other waste items. These incidents strain our system and our staff. Nearly all after-hours calls are for clogged lines or overloads at pump stations due to wipes, grease and other items that should never be flushed or disposed down a drain. Help us help you by only ever flushing toilet paper,” said DSSS Director Michael Vinay.

###