

Date of Hearing: April 22, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1744 (Addis) – As Amended April 9, 2026

Policy Committee:	Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials	Vote:	7 - 0
	Privacy and Consumer Protection		15 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill makes it unlawful for a person to represent in advertising or on the label or container of any sunscreen product, as defined, sold in the state that the product is "reef safe," "reef friendly," "ocean safe," "marine safe," "ocean friendly," "marine conscious," "reef conscious," or a similar term or phrase likely to cause a reasonable consumer to believe that the product does not harm marine ecosystems unless the product does not contain any chemical ultraviolet (UV) filters, including the ones enumerated in the bill.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Under existing law, it is unlawful for any person to make any untruthful, deceptive, or misleading environmental marketing claim, whether explicit or implied. A violation of this prohibition is a misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment in county jail not to exceed six months, or by a fine not to exceed \$2,500, or by both. The prohibition in this bill is subject to the same enforcement mechanism.

This bill may result in incarceration costs (local funds, General Fund) to the counties, possibly in excess of \$150,000; actual incarceration costs will depend on the number of convictions and the length of each sentence. The average annual cost to incarcerate one person in county jail is approximately \$29,000, though costs are higher in larger counties. County incarceration costs are not subject to reimbursement by the state. However, overcrowding in county jails creates cost pressure on the General Fund because the state has historically granted new funding to counties to offset overcrowding resulting from public safety realignment. The state must reimburse these costs from the General Fund if the Commission on State Mandates determines the duties imposed by this bill constitute a reimbursable state mandate.

The Legislative Analyst’s Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

Using misleading or factually untrue labels on products is a deceptive practice that not only breaks consumer trust but also creates unfair competition against honest brands. We have seen this in recent years with sunscreen products that market themselves as ‘reef safe’ or

otherwise ‘reef friendly’ because companies know that there is a market for people who genuinely care about the environment...As a result, the average consumer is more likely to use sunscreen that harms the environment because the label told them it was reef safe.

This practice has directly harmed aquatic life, particularly corals, which are already facing the threats associated with climate change. AB 1744 will help ensure that consumers can make truly informed choices when buying sunscreen without the fear of being misled by unfair mislabeling practices.

- 2) **Background.** This bill is sponsored by the Eco Club of C.K. McClatchy High School, which writes that scientific research and peer-reviewed studies show that many chemicals used in sunscreens can harm rocky reefs, corals, kelp, and other marine life by disrupting photosynthesis, damaging DNA, and causing coral bleaching. The organization notes that despite growing awareness of these harms, some sunscreen products containing chemical UV filters are still marketed as “reef safe,” misleading consumers and undermining marine protection efforts.

This bill does not ban sunscreen; rather, it prohibits a person from marketing their product as being safe for reefs, the ocean, or marine life if the product contains chemical UV filters that studies have shown can be toxic to aquatic life.

In their letter of concern, the Personal Care Products Council (PCPC) argues, “data does not definitively show a causal link between the chemical [UV] filters targeted by this bill and negative impacts to the reef and marine ecosystem.” PCPC contends that although this bill is not a ban or restriction on the use of UV filters, the organization is concerned about the assertion the bill makes that UV filters are unsafe for the environment: “Sunscreens are a critical tool in preventing skin cancer and anything that would lead to fewer consumers using these products is something that would gravely concern us.”

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