

Hawaii Approves Bill Banning Sunscreen That Harm Coral Reefs

Hawaii just became the first state to pass a bill banning the sale of sunscreen containing the chemicals oxybenzone and octinoxate, which scientists say harm coral reefs. The Hawaiian Coral Reef stretches for more than 2000 kilometers in the Central Pacific and is a major part of Hawaii's tourism economy. It also accounts for nearly 85 percent of all coral reefs in the United States. Scientists have found that sunscreens with these chemicals cause coral bleaching when washed off in the ocean, and make the reefs more susceptible to viral infections. The chemicals are not biodegradable, so they remain in the water long after the coral has died.

The Hawaii sunscreen bill now awaits the signature of the governor. If signed, the new rules should go into effect Jan. 1, 2021.

Amazingly, this is a first-in-the-world law. So, Hawaii is definitely on the cutting edge by banning these dangerous chemicals in sunscreens." – State Sen. Mike Gabbard, who introduced the bill

Craig Downs is a scientist who wrote a 2015 peer-examined study which concluded that oxybenzone threatened coral reefs. He estimated that 14,000 tons of sunscreen is rinsed off into the in oceans every year, with the greatest damage found in reef areas in Hawaii and the Caribbean islands. Downs stated,

We have lost at least 80 percent of the coral reefs in the Caribbean. Any small effort to reduce oxybenzone pollution could mean that a coral reef survives a long, hot summer, or that a degraded area recovers. Everyone wants to build coral

nurseries for reef restoration, but this will achieve little if the factors that originally killed off the reef remain or intensify in the environment.”

Downs also said,

Hawaii’s reefs have been slowly dying over the past 20 years, and that death spiral has been accelerating with the impact of an El Niño-induced mass bleaching events and increased local pollution impacts from both tourism and development. Everyone has come together to support this legislation, from local nurses and doctors, to resorts and airlines, as well as the entrepreneurial spirit of new sunscreen companies to supply reef-safer products.”

Sunscreen manufacturers already sell “reef-friendly” sunscreen, and companies have plenty of time to sell products that contain the two chemicals since the ban will not take effect until January 2021.

Of course, many sunscreen manufacturers, including Bayer, the maker of Coppertone, and the state’s major doctors group, feel the ban goes too far. Many are calling for more studies to be done. The American Chemistry Council also opposed the bill. Sharon Har was one of four Hawaiian lawmakers who voted against the bill. She stated,

It’s a feel good measure. Yes, we must protect the environment – it is our number one resource – but at the end of the day, studies have pointed to global warming, human contact, coastal development” as other significant threats to coral.

She’s right about other factors being an issue. Sunscreen isn’t the only enemy of coral reefs. Other pollutants known to be causing harm to the reefs include agricultural runoff and sewage dumping. Global warming is also causing reef

degradation. But we feel, and many environmentalist groups agree, this is at least a step in the right direction.

Reef-safe sunscreen alternatives like TropicSport and Raw Elements use zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. These ingredients are “non-nano” in size, and many are believed to be healthier for the environment and for us humans as well. If they are below nano-particles, smaller than 100 nanometers, the creams can be ingested by the corals.

Zinc oxide and titanium dioxide sunscreens are still thought to generate free radicals when exposed to sunlight, which can attack the nuclei of skin cells and cause mutations, i.e. cancer. Check out *Sunscreen Danders* and *Natural, Safe Sunscreen Options with Homemade Sunscreen Recipe* for more information.

Recommended:

- *Sugar Leads to Depression – World’s First Trial Proves Gut and Brain are Linked (Protocol Included)*
- *Best Supplements To Kill Candida and Everything Else You Ever Wanted To Know About Fungal Infections*
- *How to Detox From Plastics and Other Endocrine Disruptors*

Sources:

- *Hawaii Passes Bill to Ban Sun Care Products That Harm Coral – VOA News*
- *Hawaii Passes Bill Banning Sunscreen That Can Harm Coral Reefs – NY Times*
- *Hawaii Approves Bill Banning Sunscreen Believed To Kill Coral Reefs – NPR*