

Anthony Viola,
Chairperson



Kiana Diaz,
District Manager

September 15, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

Alister F. Martin, MD, MPP
Commissioner
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Gotham Center
42-09 28th Street
Long Island City, NY 11101-4132

Re: Proposed Rules Implementing Local Law 136 of 2025 (New Chapter 42 of Title 24 of the Rules of the City of New York) – Restricted Substances in Menstrual and Intimate Care Products

Dear Commissioner Martin:

Community Board 12-Manhattan (the “Board”) writes to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (“DOHMH”) in support of the proposed rules implementing Local Law 136 of 2025 (“Local Law 136”) regarding restricted substances in menstrual and intimate care products, published in the City Record on August 14, 2026, and scheduled for public hearing on September 16, 2026.

Local Law 136 represents an important public health measure intended to reduce exposure to potentially harmful substances in products that New Yorkers use in direct and intimate contact with their bodies. The law requires the Commissioner of Health and Mental Hygiene to designate by rule intentionally added ingredients that constitute restricted substances, including lead, mercury and related compounds, formaldehyde, triclosan, toluene, talc, certain phthalates and parabens, perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and fragrance. We support DOHMH’s proposed rules to implement this requirement and advance the protections established by the law.

The Board strongly supports the principle that menstrual and intimate care products sold or distributed in New York City should be safe and should not expose consumers unnecessarily to restricted substances. At the same time, the Board has consistently raised an important consideration regarding implementation: safer products must also remain affordable and accessible.

Menstrual and intimate care products are necessities, not discretionary purchases. Implementation of these protections should therefore avoid creating a situation in which compliance results in significantly higher costs for consumers or makes compliant products more difficult to obtain. These concerns are particularly important for low-

income and working-class New Yorkers, who may already face difficulty affording menstrual and intimate care products, and other basic necessities. The Board specifically raises the concern about the potential cost of compliant products and the availability of free or very low-cost alternatives.

We therefore urge DOHMH, in implementing Local Law 136, to consider measures that promote both product safety and equitable access, including:

- Ensuring that free or low-cost compliant menstrual and intimate care products are broadly available to New Yorkers who need them, including through schools, shelters, community-based organizations, public facilities, and other appropriate distribution points;
- Monitoring the affordability and availability of compliant products so that implementation does not unintentionally create financial or geographic barriers to access;
- Working with manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and other stakeholders to anticipate potential supply disruptions and help ensure an adequate supply of compliant products throughout the City;
- Providing retailers, including small and locally owned businesses, with clear guidance and sufficient notice to understand the requirements, identify compliant products, and transition their inventory without unnecessarily reducing affordable options for consumers; and
- Conducting clear, accessible, and multilingual public education so consumers understand the new protections, what the restrictions mean, and how to identify and access compliant products.

Such measures should complement, rather than weaken or delay, the public health protections established by Local Law 136. Protecting New Yorkers from unnecessary exposure to restricted substances and ensuring equitable access to essential menstrual and intimate care products are mutually reinforcing public health goals.

We commend the DOHMH for moving forward with the implementation of Local Law 136 and generally support the proposed rules designating restricted substances in menstrual and intimate care products. We encourage DOHMH to pair these protections with thoughtful implementation strategies that ensure the benefits of safer products are available to all New Yorkers, regardless of income or neighborhood.

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Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on this important public health matter.

Sincerely,



Anthony Viola
Chairperson

CC: Darly Corniel, Chair of Health & Environment, Community Board 12-Manhattan

Hon. Zohran Mamdani, Mayor, NYC
Hon. Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate
Hon. Brad Hoylman-Sigal, MBPO

Hon. Julie Menin, Speaker
Hon. Shaun Abreu, Majority Leader
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Councilmember