Dear [Welsh Assembly Member],

I am writing from [WI name] in [constituency] to inform you of the National Federation of Women’s Institutes’ new campaign concerning the contamination of the oceans from microplastic fibres, which passed with an overwhelming 98.9% majority at the 2017 WI Annual Meeting.

Microplastic fibres are small plastic fragments 5mm or smaller that are shed from synthetic clothes when laundered and end up in the sea and wider environment. The scale of the problem is large; millions of people wash their clothes every week, shedding these tiny particles that are too small to be caught by the machine’s filters, flowing into the sewage system and eventually into the ocean. Due to their small size microplastic fibres are readily ingested by aquatic life, filling up their stomachs which can eventually cause death. We also know that the plastic fibres attract toxins and harmful chemical pollutants which then end up in the food we eat, the long-term effects of which are not yet clear.

Given the scale of the problem, there is an urgent need for more research to identify and develop potential solutions. We need to better understand the long-term impact of microplastic fibres on the marine environment, develop a deeper understanding about why different textiles perform differently when washed, and to identify ways to prevent fibres being released into the water supply.

I am particularly concerned about … *[give an example; this could be microplastic fibres entering the food chain, the effects it is having on marine life]* and as my AM I hope you also share my concern.

I am asking you to write to the Minister for the Environment Hannah Blythyn, to ensure the issue of microplastic fibres is considered in the work of Natural Resources Wales and to explore new methods of reducing plastic waste.

In particular, I would welcome commitment to in-depth research into microplastic fibres and measurement of the problem through sampling microplastic fibres in waste water treatment facilities to understand the scale of the issue.

Yours sincerely,

[Your name or WI’s name]

[Postcode]