# OceanSaver's advertisement banned for misleading sustainability claims



The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has mandated the withdrawal of a television and online advertisement by cleaning product brand OceanSaver, citing concerns over unsubstantiated sustainability claims. The decision follows complaints primarily from the competitor Ecover UK, which challenged multiple assertions made within the ads.

The television advertisement, which first aired on 25 April 2024, was developed by Hearts & Minds and features a narrative that opens with a man engaging in laundry activities. He reaches for OceanSaver’s laundry capsules, prompting a whimsical appearance of crabs that begin to sing. The song includes lyrics that affirm the product's sustainability, stating: “You switched all your cleaning to be plastic-free without harmful chemicals so you don’t harm the sea.” The advertisement closes with a visual of the packaging declaring it as "plastic free" alongside a message reading: “OceanSaver. The ocean will thank you.”

This advertisement marked OceanSaver's inaugural foray into television marketing and was part of a promotional strategy following the brand’s recognition as a Sky Zero Footprint finalist, which included £250,000 worth of airtime. OceanSaver has described its products as utilising biodegradable materials, specifically polyvinyl alcohol (PVOH), while emphasising that this polymer does not fall under typical plastic classifications due to its solubility in water and absence of solid microparticles.

The ASA investigated four specific claims raised by Ecover, including the assertions of being "plastic-free," containing "zero microplastics," being "fully biodegradable," and the promise that users could engage with the product without harming aquatic life. In its analysis, the ASA determined that the claim "zero microplastics" and the assertion that the products do not harm the sea lacked adequate evidence. Furthermore, the ASA stated that OceanSaver had failed to provide sufficient proof that the packaging and products indeed adhered to their sustainability claims regarding microplastics and environmental impact.

In its findings, the ASA ruled that the advertisement was likely to mislead consumers and prohibited its future broadcast in its current format. The authority has underscored the necessity for broader substantiation of environmental claims from brands, particularly in relation to the complete life cycle of products.

In their response to the ASA's findings, OceanSaver acknowledged that the advertising aimed to promote environmentally responsible consumer decisions. The brand stated, “It’s clear that while our intentions were good, we could have provided more detailed explanations about the environmental impact of plastics and harmful chemicals – and what our products do to address them.” OceanSaver also indicated plans to adjust its advertising language in future campaigns in order to better clarify the environmental implications of their products, indicating a willingness to enhance transparency.

Hearts & Minds, the agency behind the ad, opted not to provide a comment regarding the ASA's decision.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.taylorwessing.com/en/insights-and-events/insights/2024/12/aq-top-asa-rulings-q4-2024> - This URL supports the general trend of ASA rulings focusing on misinterpretation of environmental claims and the importance of substantiating such assertions. The ASA's emphasis on ensuring that environmental claims are not misleading aligns with the scrutiny faced by OceanSaver.
* <https://www.dlapiper.com/en-us/insights/blogs/mse-today/2025/asa-rulings-summary-18-december-2024-8-january-2025> - This URL highlights the ASA's stringent standards for environmental claims, particularly those using terms like 'sustainable' or 'eco-friendly,' which must be thoroughly substantiated. OceanSaver faced a similar challenge in proving the sustainability of their products.
* <https://www.taylorwessing.com/en/insights-and-events/insights/2024/12/aq-q4-2024-a-visual-guide-to-asa-rulings> - This resource details the increased proactive role of the ASA in investigating advertisements, which aligns with the proactive measures that might have been taken in the OceanSaver case, highlighting the ASA's broader focus on ensuring advertising compliance.
* <https://www.asa.org.uk/> - The Advertising Standards Authority's official website would typically provide information on how they handle and decide cases involving misleading environmental claims. It supports understanding the context and framework within which the ASA addresses such challenges.
* <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents> - While not specific to OceanSaver, the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008, referenced in broader UK legislation, supports understanding the legal framework governing unfair trading practices that the ASA rulings often address.
* <https://www.asa.org.uk/codes-and-rulings/advice-online/cap-code.html> - This URL provides access to the CAP Code, which is the set of rules that advertisers must comply with in the UK. The ASA's decision on OceanSaver's advertisement would have been based on adherence to these guidelines.