

Letter of Support for Legislation to Address the Global Plastic Waste Crisis

November 21, 2019

U.S. Senator Tom Udall
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC, 20510

U.S. Representative Alan Lowenthal
108 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Udall and Representative Lowenthal,

As a diverse group of environmental and environmental justice organizations, we are writing to express our shared support for your work. Many of the organizations and individuals who have signed on to this letter have provided comments in response to your discussion draft language. In addition to that feedback, we want to reinforce our collective excitement and encouragement. The core elements of this bill exemplify an ongoing commitment to real solutions—prioritizing source reduction and reuse while preventing the proliferation of false solutions, be it incineration, waste-to-fuel or an overreliance on recycling.

We appreciate that you recognize that plastic manufacturers and retailers need to be held accountable for generating so many wasteful items. Creating a system in which those producers share responsibility is paramount, and this discussion draft succeeds in addressing that vital issue by creating incentives to reduce waste and encouraging cost-sharing. However, we also recognize that not all reduction requires redesign, and we agree that some of the most common and hazardous forms of plastic pollution can and should be eliminated from everyday use.

Many of us also work in states where municipalities are handicapped by preemptive laws, leaving them unable to take necessary actions to reduce plastic pollution. We support your efforts to allow state and local governments to take action in order to protect their residents and the environment.

Finally, we welcome the language to address the upstream effects of plastic production. Updating our current laws and regulations will allow us to understand the cumulative health and economic impacts of new plastic-producing facilities on local communities as well as the surrounding air, water and climate— all of which will force better practices.

We look forward to remaining engaged, and continue to offer our support as this discussion draft develops and is introduced.

Sincerely,

The 5 Gyres Institute
Adventures in Waste
Center for Biological
Diversity
The Center for Oceanic
Awareness, Research, and
Education (COARE)
Environment America

Greenpeace USA
GreenLatinos
Inland Ocean Coalition
The Last Beach Cleanup
Oceana
Plastic Pollution Coalition
SoCal 350 Climate Action

The Story of Stuff Project
Surfrider Foundation
Texas Campaign for the
Environment
U.S. Public Interest Research
Group
Zero Waste Washington