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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4209

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COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION
IN EUROPE (U.S. HELSINKI COMMISSION)

May 13, 2022

The Honorable Tim Ryan
Chairman
Legislative Branch Subcommittee
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jaime Herrera Beutler
Ranking Member
Legislative Branch Subcommittee
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Ryan and Ranking Member Herrera Beutler:

Thank you for the opportunity to present my top priority for the Fiscal Year 2023 Legislative Branch Appropriations bill to ensure we lead by example and reduce plastic pollution. I appreciate your consideration of this request to include report language reaffirming the Subcommittee's support for implementing a procurement ban on single-use plastics.

The world is drowning in mountains of single-use plastic waste, which has been made worse by an inadequate recycling infrastructure struggling to keep up. The most effective way to reduce plastic pollution is to reduce the volume of single-use plastics and other containers that are being used in the first place and subsequently clogging the recycling stream.

The federal government has a responsibility to lead on this and other environmental issues, and in that context, the prevention of plastic waste is most easily accomplished by putting a stop to the federal procurement of these products wherever possible. By cutting waste at the source, the federal government can immediately reduce the resulting waste and set an example for state and local governments, businesses, and constituents on how to address mounting waste today.

Our domestic recycling industry certainly needs more support. But while Congress debates the best way to strengthen our waste infrastructure, we should act immediately to minimize our waste and reduce the burden on the nation's processing and recycling systems.

I was pleased that the Subcommittee included language I previously requested with Representatives Mike Quigley, Alan Lowenthal and Mark DeSaulnier directing agencies to eliminate or reduce plastic waste in the last two fiscal years' appropriations bills and reports. Unfortunately, single-use plastics are visibly still in frequent use across the Capitol Complex. I ask that the Subcommittee reaffirm its support for eliminating or reducing plastics and direct the Architect of the Capitol to provide a report on the status of implementing the Sec. 210 plastic waste reduction directive not later than 30 days after enactment of the upcoming appropriations

bill. I was proud to be joined in this request by more than 20 colleagues, including my co-leads Representatives Quigley and Lowenthal.

Thank you for considering this important request and for your leadership on the Subcommittee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Cohen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue ink color.

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress