Eastman
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March 2, 2020

The Honorable Paul Tonko (NY-20)
Chairman
Subcommittee on Environment & Climate Change
House Committee on Energy & Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC
20515

The Honorable John Shimkus (IL-15)
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Environment & Climate Change
House Committee on Energy & Commerce
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC
20515

Dear Chairman Tonko and Ranking Member Shimkus,

I write on behalf of Eastman to thank you for your leadership and commitment to address how the climate change and the global environment are affected by recycling and management of waste plastics.

Eastman is committed to supporting a circular economy: An economy that focuses on making the most of the world's resources by providing solutions to reduce, reuse and recycle products and materials that typically end up in landfills, incinerators and waterways. This requires policy and regulatory approaches that dramatically improve the collection and sorting of waste materials and that enable material-to-material chemical recycling.

Basic recycling, or mechanical recycling, is by far the most common method today. It can process specific kinds of clear plastic, primarily bottles or containers with the recycle code of 1 or 2. Roughly 77 *billion* pounds of waste plastics enter the municipal waste stream in the U.S. each year. And only about 16 percent of it is currently collected for mechanically recycling.

Chemical recycling can address the remaining waste plastic that is being incinerated, landfilled or is leaking into the environment. The power of chemical recycling is that it uses materials that aren't suitable for mechanical recycling, thus opening many more products to a circular life cycle.

The two types of recycling work in different ways and are ideal for different types of materials. Mechanical recycling requires pure, clean waste streams and includes collecting, sorting, washing, drying, and grinding waste plastics – during the entire process, the polymers stay intact. This is highly effective for some types of plastic, but it was not designed to handle more complex types of plastic and other materials, such as textiles and carpet, when they reach their end of life.

Chemical recycling *is* designed to handle complex and mixed plastics, and the quality of the plastics recycled this way never degrades because the waste is broken down to the molecular level. When chemical recycling is used for waste plastic, the plastic is broken down to its original molecular state and then built back-up into polymers which have equivalent performance to virgin plastics made from fossil feedstocks. During mechanical recycling, the polymers lose performance and quality and have limited use for certain applications. Chemical recycling not only solves the trade-off in performance but can also be used to up-cycle waste plastics into high performing durable products.

In addition, creating recycling options for materials that can't be mechanically recycled improves the economics at scale. That's where chemical recycling comes in as a vital complement to mechanical recycling.

Eastman has developed breakthrough chemical recycling technologies – currently operating at commercial scale - that enable us to recycle almost any plastic waste an infinite number of times, creating a true circular solution. In 2019, Eastman began chemically recycling a broad set of materials and is moving rapidly to incorporate more and more content from chemical recycling processes into our products.

Eastman's chemical recycling technologies have a better carbon footprint than the manufacturing of virgin plastics. Also, by replacing limited fossil feedstocks with waste plastic, chemical recycling can advance decarbonization and demonstrate how chemical recycling has the potential to reduce emissions and support a truly circular economy We believe companies should lead by example, not only by making improvements and innovating within their own gates, but by also supporting sound public policies and actively participating in partnerships that address climate change holistically.

The problem of waste is truly a global crisis. There are lot of companies talking about chemical recycling, and we are pulling for peers across the industry to succeed because we know we can't solve this problem alone. We will need to collaborate to activate and develop an infrastructure to support the volume of waste plastics that can now be recycled with this array of technologies.

I very much appreciate your attention to this issue and thank you for your continued dedication to ensuring your colleagues understand the scope of the problem and the solutions that are available today to address all kinds of waste plastic.

Signature,

Steve Crawford
Senior Vice President, Chief Technology & Sustainability Officer