



The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

March 26, 2024

Cc: The Honorable Antony Blinken, Secretary, U.S. Department of State
Michael Regan, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
Jennifer Granholm, Secretary, Department of Energy
Brenda Mallory, Chair, Council on Environmental Quality
John Podesta, Senior Advisor for Clean Energy Innovation, and Implementation
Jonathan Black, Senior Director for Chemical Safety and Plastic Pollution Prevention at the White House Council on Environmental Quality
Xavier Becerra, Secretary of Health and Human Services
[Sent via electronic mail]

Dear President Biden,

Subject: Scientists' Coalition support for a U.S. global plastics treaty position guided by independent scientific consensus.

The Scientists' Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty ([The Scientists' Coalition](#)):

- Wishes to take this opportunity to thank the Biden Administration for taking a stand on plastic pollution and environmental justice as reflected in some U.S. domestic legislation, executive action and commitments.
- Welcome opportunities to offer independent evidence-based recommendations for a U.S. negotiating position that will lead to a successful global plastics treaty outcome supportive of all stakeholders and rights holders including the global business community and environmental non-governmental organizations.
- Respectfully requests a meeting on April 10 in Washington D.C.

The Scientists' Coalition is an independent body of over 300 independent scientists from over 50 countries worldwide. We have attended all the plastics treaty negotiations meetings and, collectively, we provide independent, multidisciplinary expertise on plastics and plastic pollution to all member state delegations. The Scientists' Coalition recommends that the U.S. negotiating position and the treaty should include the following key elements, in order to effectively assess, monitor, and regulate plastic chemicals, polymers, products, alternatives, and substitutes, technologies, systems, and services:

- A science-policy interface (SPI) as a subsidiary body under the global plastics treaty with multi stakeholder representation guided by the following principles and policies: declaration of interest, representation, participation, safety, sustainability, and transparency.

- Timebound plastics chemicals and primary plastic polymer reduction targets and measures supported by a dedicated financial mechanism, capacity building, technical support, and national implementation plans.
- A scope that covers the full life cycle of plastics (as per [UNEA Resolution 5/14](#)) starting with criteria and assessments to ensure the safe, just, and sustainable extraction of feedstocks intended to produce plastics all the way through to the safe and sustainable removal of plastics from the environment and remediation of polluted sites.
- Protections and measures for just transition to achieve a safe and sustainable circular economy.
- Rules of procedure that allow for voting if consensus cannot be reached to ensure a few member states cannot veto the ambitious and comprehensive treaty humankind so desperately needs.
- Text recognising the important role of all workers, including waste pickers and workers in informal and cooperative settings and respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and their knowledge systems.

We are concerned that the Administration is receiving advice from stakeholders that is not supported by, or directly contradicts, independent scientific evidence. For example, the broad assertions made in the ACC letter March 14, 2024 regarding the plastics treaty. ACC's claims and recommended measures contradict the [Business Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty](#) and [The World Business for Sustainable Development](#) representing the global business community and the world's largest manufacturers and employers, including those based in the U.S. **The Biden Administration has made clear and unequivocal commitments to comprehensively address plastics, however, the ACC recommendations and current U.S. position on the global plastics treaty are inconsistent with those commitments.**

We are aware of unscientific interventions and submissions throughout the INCs which have delayed and derailed progress and diluted the ambition of the treaty. In addition, we are receiving some contradictory messages from the U.S. For example, the State Department promotes a "circular economy of plastics" that focuses on product design; but not on primary plastic polymer (PPP) reduction targets. This is not a position supported by the Biden Administration which has stated in public remarks, "We can't recycle our way out of the problem."

We agree that we cannot recycle our way out of the problem. Our scientists have analysed midstream and downstream impacts on cumulative plastics production and conclude that **optimizing waste management, removal technologies, and improved circularity are insufficient to curb plastic pollution in the short, mid, or long terms: the need to set global and national reduction targets for primary plastics production is evident.** Our scientists' research and [commentary on the revised zero draft of the global plastics treaty](#) emphasize that plastics are hazardous to human and environmental health and contribute to climate change and biodiversity loss all along the full life cycle of plastics from extraction of plastics feedstocks through to the remediation of contaminated sites. Plastics are one of the least circular mass manufactured materials: virgin plastics and hazardous chemicals are added at each cycle; hazardous chemicals, micro and nano particles are released at each cycle; and even polymers that can be recycled a few times will be destined for landfill or end up in the environment. The suggestion that plastics can be perpetually, safely, and sustainably recycled is not supported by independent science. **We would like to discuss options for safe and sustainable chemicals, polymers, products, and technologies, systems, and services.**

Global plastics production continues to escalate, with global plastics use projected to [triple between 2019 and 2060, from 460 million tonnes \(Mt\) to 1,321 Mt](#). An estimated economic cost of marine pollution alone per year is [\\$3,300-\\$33,000 per tonne of marine plastic](#). Moreover, estimates show that the cost of plastics-related disease burden was [\\$249 billion in 2018 in the U.S alone](#). We have also been tracking increasing reports of microplastics in human hearts, lungs, arteries, and placenta. All plastics release hazardous chemicals including hormone disruptors with the potential to mutate genes across human generations, and which are linked to numerous human health outcomes including reproductive and developmental disorders, certain cancers, obesity, and impaired immune function. **The economic, environment, and human health costs of the externalities of plastics production will continue to escalate without ambitious action in the treaty.**

The Scientists' Coalition stands ready to support the U.S. and to ensure accurate, evidence-based decision making throughout the INCs toward an effective and just global plastics treaty. Some of our U.S. members will be in Washington D.C. on April 10. We would welcome the opportunity to meet to discuss the scientific consensus on this crisis and our recommendations. We are also available to meet with the US delegation at the negotiating meeting in Ottawa, Canada, April 23-29.

Sincerely



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