

February 8, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

President Biden,

On behalf of our organizations and our millions of members and supporters, we thank you for being a consistent champion of efforts to protect people and the planet. You have demonstrated historic leadership on some of the most pressing environmental issues we currently face, taking bold actions to address both climate change and nature loss. We respectfully request that you take similar ambitious executive action to address plastic pollution, by directing the federal government to take a comprehensive, coordinated, whole-of-government approach in response to this growing threat to the health of our communities and our environment.

Each year, nearly 11 million metric tons of plastic waste flow into the ocean from land-based sources alone. Without immediate action, that number is expected to triple by the year 2040. This growing tide of plastic waste is affecting the planet as a whole: clogging our oceans and streams, harming wildlife and ecosystems, fouling our communities, and contributing to the climate crisis. There is also growing scientific evidence that the production of plastics and the microplastics they leave behind are negatively impacting human health and the health of communities across our nation.

We commend the leadership that your Administration has shown on this issue, including as part of the ongoing negotiations to forge an international agreement on plastic pollution by the end of 2024. This global agreement presents a singular opportunity to address the plastic pollution crisis at the scale required. Continued U.S. leadership is critical to its success, and this means supporting strong, ambitious, and binding provisions as part of the agreement as well as the creation of robust policies and incentives to address plastic pollution here at home, including at the national level. We believe this moment presents a historic opportunity to demonstrate presidential leadership on an urgent issue in a way that spurs both domestic and international action benefiting people, the environment, and the economy.

There is strong and broad support for action on this issue. The American public has expressed serious concern over the negative impacts of plastic pollution and is strongly in favor of action to reduce plastic waste. Public opinion polling conducted by World Wildlife Fund found that 86% of Americans are in favor of transitioning from an economy that relies on single use products to one that is truly circular. However, significant barriers remain, including a lack of effective and accessible recycling infrastructure. According to recent data from The Recycling Partnership, the current national residential recycling rate is only 21%.

There is also growing support from the private sector to address this problem. We are increasingly seeing major U.S. corporations making public-facing commitments to reduce plastic waste, including those part of the OneSource Coalition, the US Plastics Pact, and the Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty. Civil society organizations, including a number of our own, are partnering with leading

companies, as well as cities, states, foundations, individuals, and policymakers at all levels, to build a collaborative, whole-of-society approach to addressing plastic pollution.

By instituting a whole-of-government approach at the federal level, you can empower these growing efforts, help them flourish, and add significant momentum to efforts to advance ambitious solutions to plastic pollution in the U.S. and internationally. We respectfully encourage you to take such presidential action, including the following:

**1. Establish a National Goal and Targets to Reduce Plastic Pollution**

- Establish a goal to end plastic pollution in the United States through a full lifecycle approach by 2040.
- Set new nationwide targets to reduce production of problematic and unnecessary single-use plastics
- Establish reuse and/or refill requirements in the consumer goods and food and drink service sectors, including around targets, standards, and procurement

**2. Develop National Frameworks to Advance the Transition to a Circular Economy**

- Incentivize the establishment and expansion of reusable and refillable systems across the country
- Institute additional policies that incentivize businesses to transition from single-use plastic products to more innovative, sustainable options
- Develop a framework and institute policies to enable, guide, and facilitate the adoption and implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) at the national level<sup>1</sup>
- Develop a standardized set of metrics for reporting and measuring progress toward national goals and targets
- Develop end-of-life material and design standards to ensure products meet investment and infrastructure requirements, using tools such as the Circular Packaging Assessment
- Support research and development for innovative material and product design

**3. Improve Waste Management Infrastructure**

- Incentivize and promote the development of a standardized and accessible waste management infrastructure nationwide to ensure proper recycling, effective reuse, and management of plastic waste
- Capture and remove plastic waste from waterways, wildlife habitats, and localized plastic waste habitats
- Work to eliminate ocean disposal by increasing enforcement of dumping and disposal of waste in the ocean and establishing solid waste disposal infrastructure for end-of-life fishing gear and nets

**4. Prioritize the Health of People, Communities, and Ecosystems**

- Fully integrate environmental justice considerations in the development and implementation of frameworks, guidance, and policies to address plastic pollution

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<sup>1</sup> Research from The Recycling Partnership estimates that national EPR would divert over 20 million tons of recyclable material from disposal each year, putting this material back into the circular economy.

- Identify and eliminate chemicals and polymers of concern as well as problematic and avoidable plastics products including single-use and short-lived plastic products

**5. Support Strong International Cooperation**

- Advocate for an ambitious, effective, legally binding global plastics agreement that addresses the full plastics life cycle, as well as its strong implementation
- Direct U.S. agencies to collaborate with international partners to address plastic pollution through a full lifecycle approach and on a global scale, including via technical support, increased foreign assistance to support action in developing countries, and continued support to public-private partnership efforts, such as the Department of State's End Plastic Pollution International Collaborative (EPPIC)

We thank you again for your leadership and your commitment to addressing the challenge of global plastic pollution, which threatens the health of both people and the planet. We ask that you take executive action to elevate and enhance the federal government's response to this challenge in a way that is both comprehensive and bold.

Our organizations stand ready to support you in this and to work with your Administration to advance solutions to plastic pollution at the scope and scale that is needed, alongside committed partners at all levels of government and society.

Sincerely,



Carter Roberts  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
World Wildlife Fund



Keefe Harrison  
Founder and Chief Executive Officer  
The Recycling Partnership



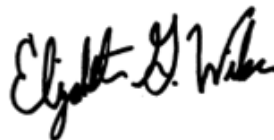
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Cc: Brenda Mallory, Chair, White House Council on Environmental Quality

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