

September 16, 2021

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chair, Senate Committee on Finance
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Neal
Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means
372 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Wyden and Congressman Neal,

Plastic waste is filling our communities, our landfills, and our ecosystems. Consumers hope to reduce their reliance on single-use plastic, but often feel overwhelmed by a complex recycling system and do not know where to start. Companies are making commitments to use less virgin plastic, but can't find reliable supplies of recycled materials. Our markets are flooded with artificially cheap virgin plastic, and it's clear that it's become a habit our economy can't break on its own. We need action now to fix our reliance on virgin plastic, and that begins with a fee on virgin plastic resin used for single-use products.

Nearly 99% of plastics are made from chemicals derived from fossil fuels, which have been artificially subsidized for decades by the federal government. As a result, it is cheaper to simply produce new plastic material than to recycle existing plastic, resulting in a constant one-way flow of plastics from production to consumption to disposal. Petroleum and natural gas producers are relying on the production of virgin plastic to create demand as the nation moves toward more sustainable buildings and vehicles. By 2030, greenhouse gas emissions from plastic production are expected to reach 1.3 billion tons, equivalent to 300 coal-fired power plants. We can't solve our global climate crisis without addressing the plastic loophole. To kickstart a transition to a circular economy, where plastic is a truly recyclable resource, we need to fix the economic incentives that reward waste.

In a sea of solutions, a virgin plastic fee is one tool needed to transition to a circular economy.

A virgin plastic fee, such as the REDUCE Act, as introduced by Senator Whitehouse and Representative Suozzi, will level the economic playing field between virgin and recycled plastic, incentivize reuse and recycling of plastic, and will raise revenue to invest in needed recycling and waste management infrastructure. In our current political moment, we cannot afford to pass on the opportunity to create change in upcoming legislative packages, including reconciliation.

We, the undersigned organizations, support the establishment of a fee on virgin plastic resin, and will continue to fight for policies that support a circular economy.

Signed,





CC:

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
The Honorable Maria Cantwell
The Honorable Robert Menendez
The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
The Honorable Benjamin L Cardin
The Honorable Sherrod Brown
The Honorable Michael Bennet
The Honorable Robert Casey, Jr.
The Honorable Mark Warner
The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
The Honorable Maggie Hassan
The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto
The Honorable Elizabeth Warren

The Honorable Lloyd Doggett
The Honorable Mike Thompson
The Honorable John B. Larson
The Honorable Earl Blumenauer
The Honorable Rob Kind
The Honorable Bill Pascrell, Jr.
The Honorable Danny K. Davis
The Honorable Linda T. Sanchez
The Honorable Brian Higgins
The Honorable Terri A. Sewell
The Honorable Suzan DelBene
The Honorable Judy Chu
The Honorable Gwen Moore
The Honorable Din Kildee
The Honorable Brendan F. Boyle
The Honorable Donald S. Beyer, Jr.
The Honorable Dwight Evans
The Honorable Brad Schneider
The Honorable Tom Suozzi
The Honorable Jimmy Panetta
The Honorable Stephanie Murphy
The Honorable Jimmy Gomez
The Honorable Steven Horsford
The Honorable Stacey Plaskett