

September 29, 2023

The Honorable Gina M. Raimondo
Secretary
Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

RE: Recommendations for the U.S. Objectives in the UNEA Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) on Plastic Pollution

ETTAC Recommendation 2023-2

The Environmental Technologies Trade Advisory Committee (ETTAC) is a federally-established committee whose purpose is to advise on the policies and procedures of the U.S. government that affect exports of environmental technology, goods and services in the air, water, solid waste and recycling sectors. This includes small to large businesses, trade associations and thought leaders. In this capacity, the ETTAC appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments and recommendations to help achieve policy goals that lead to more resilient, diverse and secure supply chains, including where the circular economy plays a key role, that are essential to U.S. environmental technology, goods and services providers and creates opportunities for their deployment in international markets.

The challenges related to plastic pollution are global issues, but their effects are widely felt across the United States. As companies and organizations that develop innovative solutions for sustainable product manufacturing and are providing leading-edge services, we have a great interest in seeing the global community come together to tackle plastic pollution, moving each and every nation up the waste hierarchy and expanding capacity and capabilities across all facets of a circular economy. No plastics should end up in the environment. For that reason, we support U.S. leadership in developing, and ultimately signing, an international instrument on plastic pollution. To make a real, positive and lasting impact on human and environmental health, we recommend that the international instrument combine binding and voluntary elements to tackle plastic pollution. This hybrid framework is essential to compelling all nations to take action while recognizing that no one-sized-fits-all approach can be obligated onto all nations.

Furthermore, industry must be a part of the dialogue. Industry currently provides the technology, goods and services to supply resources to manufacturers, deliver products to market, mitigate emissions, handle waste and recycle commodities. They are an essential partner in the international instruments implementation and ultimately cutting plastic pollution.

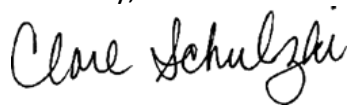
In light of the release of the agreement's "zero draft text," the ETTAC recommends the following provisions be included in the international instrument (in no particular order), which will not just meaningfully tackle plastic waste but also potentially create global market opportunities for U.S. exports of innovative know-how, goods and services, including new materials, materials management, and circular solutions:

- Develop national commitments to go along with processes to evaluate countries' implementation and compliance with the treaty. These commitments would outline national actions toward reducing plastic waste that include plans for implementing the treaty's binding provisions and voluntary commitments based on a country's unique circumstances. These action plans must incorporate input from sub-national governments as, for example, the United States' unique federalist system means the treaty's success depends upon federal, state and local cooperation.
 - Along with establishing commitments, governments (particularly developing and least developed countries) should outline technical and financial needs to implement the treaty, such as enhancements in waste management and recycling infrastructure.
- Create frameworks for mobilizing financing, technical assistance and capacity building within the international instrument to ensure an equitable implementation.
- Incorporate specific definitions of the key terms in the treaty, such as waste, non-waste, waste minimization, recycling, thermal destruction, open dumps, landfills, plastics, polymers, life-cycle analysis, etc. to ensure coherence with the treaty's obligations.
- Incorporate science- and evidence-based life-cycle analyses of plastics to ensure time and resources are spent tackling the most problematic plastics (*e.g.*, composition, performance, public awareness, available infrastructure, etc.) and mobilizing resources toward plastics and plastic product design innovation geared towards waste minimization and evaluation against alternative materials. That includes consideration of future product bans meant to solve one element of environmental harm but without consideration of the ban's broader economic and environmental impact (such as single-use plastics).
- Establish binding and voluntary terms of implementation, including timelines, public and private sector reporting requirements and measurements of progress/success.
- Integrate eco-design requirements for plastics and plastic goods that incorporate recyclability at the design phase and seek to maximize the use of recycled plastics and minimize the use of chemical additives and certain materials that inhibit or impair recyclability.
- Establish a framework for governments to set market demand signals through public procurement, such as opportunities to purchase goods for government use that are recyclable and made from post-consumer recycled plastic content and integrating government-led R&D with incentives to commercialize products that innovatively integrate recyclable plastics.

- Encourage the international standards development organizations to establish globally harmonized standards for processes and products that underlie the success of the international instrument. That begins with a stock-taking on standards already under development for circular economy frameworks, recycling technologies and processes, eco-design, product manufacturing and the upstream production of chemicals and plastics; and identifying needs for additional standards.
- Recognize that until all plastics can be recycled, a robust collection and landfill infrastructure is necessary and available to ensure that plastic that is not recycled will not leak into the environment.
- Identify international coordinating efforts necessary to remediate existing plastic pollution, such as infrastructure required to intercept litter before it enters major waterways and taking steps to eliminate open dump sites.

We appreciate the Administration's leadership in the INC process and the opportunity to present these comments and recommendations on behalf of the ETTAC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Clare Schulzki". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Clare Schulzki
ETTAC Chair

CC: Secretary of State Antony Blinken
Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan
U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai
Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm