

Plastic Production: 48 Members of Congress Address Letter to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan



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02/22/2023

Forty-eight Democratic Congressmen sent a February 9th letter to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) Administrator Michael S. Regan asking that the agency address what they argue are needed efforts regarding plastic production issues.

The three leaders of the coalition cosigning the letter include:

- Senator Cory A. Booker (D. NJ)
- U.S. Representative Jared Huffman (D. CA-02)
- U.S. Senator Jeffrey Merkley (D. OR)

By way of introduction, the letter states:

As our transportation, energy, and industrial sectors transition to clean energy, the oil and gas industry is doubling down on petrochemical and plastics, with plans to substantially expand production in the United States. These new facilities will release toxic pollutants that will further disproportionately impact the communities living in and around these areas as well as additional greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. In the face of ongoing international discussions to negotiate a legally binding instrument to address plastic pollution, it is more important now than ever for the U.S. to show leadership and ambition in the fight against plastic production and pollution.

The Congressmen request that EPA undertake the following actions:

- Create new nationwide targets for single-use plastic source reduction and reuse/refill requirements in the packaging and food service sectors
- Incentivize the expansion of reusable and refillable systems across the country, prioritizing overburdened communities through agency grant making and public-private partnerships.
- Expand the definition of covered facilities under the Solid Waste Disposal Act
- Affirm EPA’s treatment of plastic waste as “waste” under the Resource Conservation Recovery Act.
- Reject the proposal promulgated under the Trump Administration to remove pyrolysis and gasification under section 129 of the Clean Air Act.
- Remove harmful chemical recycling technologies from the National Recycling Strategy.
- Require financial assurance requirements for new or expanded covered facilities (as defined in the Protecting Communities from Plastics Act, Section 4 (a)(3)) as a condition to receiving Clean Air Act or Clean Water Act permits.

- Initiate a rulemaking under the Toxic Substances Control Act to review the entire petrochemical industry, from their facilities to specific chemicals used, to understand how these chemicals, alone or mixed, impact human health.
- Establish/lead a microplastics pilot program to test the efficacy and cost effectiveness of tools, technologies, and techniques to prevent the release of microplastics into the environment and to remove existing microplastics without causing additional harm to the environment.

A copy of the letter can be downloaded [here](#).