



Statement

For Immediate Release

June 8, 2009

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PLASTIC MAKERS WELCOME UNITED NATIONS' MARINE LITTER REPORT, SUPPORT CALL FOR SOLUTIONS BASED ON INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT

UNEP Report an Important Step to Address Worldwide Marine Litter

ARLINGTON, VA (June 8, 2009) – America's plastic makers welcomed a new report from the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) on marine litter. The American Chemistry Council (ACC) called the report's principal findings – on the need for integrated waste management to better address litter – “an organizing approach everyone can support” and “an important step toward developing the regional and global approaches necessary to solve this worldwide marine litter problem.”

However, ACC expressed concern that the press release diverges from the solutions-oriented approach taken in the report itself and demonizes some consumer products. “We are concerned that the constructive approach taken in the report is not represented in the press release, which includes an ill-considered call for a ban on plastic bags,” said Sharon Kneiss, vice president of products divisions for the American Chemistry Council. America's plastics makers have been instrumental in promoting recycling approaches that actually work – such as plastic bag recycling programs that have been adopted in California, New York, Rhode Island and Chicago.

The UNEP report outlines the major land- and sea-based sources of marine litter, including dumpsites, discharge from storm water drains, untreated municipal sewerage, shipping and fishing vessels and illegal dumping at sea. UNEP asserts that marine litter “could be dramatically reduced by improved waste reduction, waste management and recycling initiatives.” The majority of scientists and policy makers who have studied this issue agree with UNEP that effective solutions require strong regional and international partnerships to prevent litter and to increase recycling.

“We agree that plastics don't belong in our oceans and waterways – they belong in the recycling bin,” said Kneiss. “America's plastics makers have been increasing our efforts to reduce marine litter, for example, by placing more than 500 recycling bins on California's beaches in 2008 alone. We applaud UNEP's hard work to highlight the scope of the problem, and we will continue our partnership efforts to prevent marine litter.”

Plastic makers' contributions to combating marine litter include: helping develop new and innovative recycling programs nationwide; promoting industry-wide practices to contain plastic “pellets”; partnering with governments and conservationists to encourage recycling and discourage litter; working to educate children on the link between litter and marine health; working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to advance scientific understanding of marine debris; and continuing to innovate to develop more efficient packaging with less weight and volume.



About the Plastics Division

The American Chemistry Council's Plastics Division represents leading companies dedicated to providing innovative solutions to the challenges of today and tomorrow through plastics. Ongoing innovations in plastics have led to medical advances and safety equipment that make our lives better, healthier and safer every day. ACC members are finding innovative ways for plastics to help save energy, reduce green house gas emissions and decrease waste. Since plastics are a valuable resource, too valuable to waste, the Plastics Division is at the forefront of efforts to reduce litter through increased access to recycling, advancements in recycling technology, and public education.

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The American Chemistry Council (ACC) represents the leading companies engaged in the business of chemistry. ACC members apply the science of chemistry to make innovative products and services that make people's lives better, healthier and safer. ACC is committed to improved environmental, health and safety performance through Responsible Care[®], common sense advocacy designed to address major public policy issues, and health and environmental research and product testing. The business of chemistry is a \$664 billion enterprise and a key element of the nation's economy. It is one of the nation's largest exporters, accounting for ten cents out of every dollar in U.S. exports. Chemistry companies are among the largest investors in research and development. Safety and security have always been primary concerns of ACC members, and they have intensified their efforts, working closely with government agencies to improve security and to defend against any threat to the nation's critical infrastructure.

