ACC TESTIFIES IN SUPPORT OF FEDERAL POLICIES TO MODERNIZE RECYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE, ELIMINATE WASTE

WASHINGTON (March 4, 2020) – ACC today reiterated its support for bipartisan policies aimed at modernizing our national recycling infrastructure in testimony before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change.

Keith Christman, ACC’s managing director of plastics markets, told the Subcommittee that plastics producers are deeply committed to ending plastic waste in the environment and have set goals to reuse, recycle or recover all plastic packaging in the United States by 2040 and to make all plastic packaging recyclable by 2030.

“We believe these challenges, while significant, are ultimately solvable,” said Christman, noting that recent disruptions have also led to significant domestic opportunities.

“In less than three years, we have seen more than $4.2 billion in new investments in mechanical and advanced plastics recycling with potential to convert 6 billion pounds of plastics into new products,” Christman said. “These technologies offer significant economic and environmental potential.”

ACC projects that the United States could support up to 260 advanced recycling facilities, generating 39,000 jobs and nearly $10 billion in economic output. Christman told the Subcommittee that unlocking further opportunities will require a range of actions from bipartisan policies to innovation and public-private investments.

ACC and America’s plastics makers strongly support the Save Our Seas Acts, the RECOVER Act, the RECYCLE Act, and the PLASTICS Act. “But we must oppose proposals that would ban many plastic products, or impose a moratorium on new plastics facilities,” Christman told the Subcommittee members. “Those policies would increase environmental impacts.”

Recent studies have shown that replacing plastics with alternative materials would result in increased greenhouse gas emissions, energy use and waste. A study by Trucost found that the environmental costs of alternatives to plastic in 16 consumer goods sectors were nearly four times greater than the environmental cost of plastic.

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ACC’s members, who include the nation’s largest plastic producers, are leading in the deployment of system improvements and technology advances to convert a variety of used plastics into resources to make new plastics and other valuable materials. Last year companies from across the globe and throughout the plastics value chain, from manufacture through disposal, announced the creation of the Alliance to End Plastic Waste, a nonprofit that is committing $1.5 billion over five years to help end plastic waste especially in areas where it is needed most.

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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 $533 billion enterprise and a key element of the nation’s economy. It is among the largest exporters in the nation, accounting for ten percent of all U.S. goods 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.