Statement
For Immediate Release  August 26, 2010
Contact: Allyson Wilson (703) 741-5171
Email: allyson_wilson@americanchemistry.com

AMERICAN CHEMISTRY COUNCIL CALLS BROWNLEY’S COMMENTS A DISTRACTION
AB 1998 Would Eliminate Hundreds of Manufacturing Jobs and Dismantle Recycling Programs

August 26, 2010 – The American Chemistry Council today issued the following statement in response to comments attributed to Assemblywoman Julia Brownley in an Aug. 24th blog posted by the San Francisco Chronicle regarding AB 1998:

Assemblywoman Brownley’s inflammatory comments are obviously intended to distract public attention from the substance and dire consequences of Assembly Bill 1998 – her proposed legislation to ban plastic grocery bags in California and require stores to charge at least $0.05 for each paper bag. This bill is bad for the economy and bad for the environment: It will eliminate several hundred California manufacturing jobs and dismantle existing plastic bag recycling programs.

Regardless of one’s position on this issue, Californians expect and deserve more constructive dialogue from their elected officials.

ACC’s position is clear: Enhanced recycling programs are a more effective solution to reducing bag litter and increasing proper disposal. In fact, ACC sponsored legislation in 2009 (AB 1141) that would have generated nearly $30 million annually – paid for by plastic bag makers – for local and state government recycling, litter clean-up and storm water pollution prevention efforts. Unfortunately, this measure failed to advance and not once has Assemblywoman Brownley offered to sit down with ACC to discuss alternative approaches that would not result in job loss, higher grocery costs for consumers and reduced recycling opportunities. The loss of recycling opportunities is something ACC highlighted in a San Francisco Chronicle editorial, “Why is California attacking recycling?”

What did Assemblywoman Brownley say?

"Fearing reduced sales, the tobacco industry focused on tolerance and accommodation similar to what the American Chemistry Council (ACC), the front man for plastic bag makers, has advocated by waving the personal rights of everyone to pollute. It’s the American way! ... Plastic bags have crept like cancer on our earth, a cancer growing as steadily as the cancer caused by tobacco. Single-use plastic bags kill sea turtles, which mistake them for jelly fish, entangle birds and other marine life and are ingested by whales and fish.” – Assemblywoman Julia Brownley, SF Chronicle’s “Capitol Insider” blog

# # #
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 $674 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.