



# Statement

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## PLASTICS MAKERS WELCOME NEW PLASTICS ECONOMY INNOVATION PRIZE

### *Initiative to Advance Plastics Recycling and Keep Valuable Materials Out of the Ocean*

WASHINGTON (May 18, 2017)—*The Ellen MacArthur Foundation and The Prince of Wales’s International Sustainability Unit today jointly announced the \$2 million “[New Plastics Economy Innovation Prize](#),” funded by U.S. Philanthropist Wendy Schmidt. Recognizing that plastics demand is expected to double in the next 20 years, this initiative aims to advance the design and recycling of plastics—particularly packaging—to keep valuable material out of the ocean. The American Chemistry Council’s Plastics Division, which represents leading resin producers, welcomed the initiative and issued the following statement, which may be attributed to Steve Russell, vice president of plastics:*

“America’s plastics makers welcome efforts to promote innovation and advance the sustainability and recycling of plastics. We applaud those who are working to keep plastics out of our oceans and waterways. The New Plastics Economy Innovation Prize is a welcome step toward treating used plastics as valuable resources for creating new, useful products.

There are few silver bullets to improve overall sustainability in manufactured goods because of the number of valid issues that must be considered. For example, choosing lightweight materials makes great sense and even more so if those materials are recyclable. But a lightweight material that requires a lot of energy or water and isn’t recyclable would need to be evaluated against alternatives in that particular application. So we believe that a truly optimized Circular Economy doesn’t stop with recyclability, but instead takes a broader view of purpose of use, consequence of use, and the availability of alternatives.

In packaging, plastics’ ability to do more with less enables significant environmental benefits throughout the life of a package, including reductions in energy use, greenhouse gas emissions and waste. Although an initial study conducted by Trucost for the United Nations Environment Programme in 2014 quantified the degree of damage plastic packaging and consumer goods cause to natural capital, [a later study by the same firm](#) found that damages from alternative materials would be 4 times greater.

Plastics makers are working closely with packaging designers, retailers, brand owners, and other stakeholders to increase plastics recycling. Our [Wrap Recycling Action Program](#) (WRAP) has set a

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goal of doubling the recycling of flexible wraps and bags (also known as “film”) to 2 billion pounds in the United States by 2020, and our [Materials Recovery for the Future](#) collaborative is researching new ways to process more flexible packaging at U.S. materials recovery facilities. We’re engaging in nationwide multimedia outreach campaigns to motivate more consumers to participate in recycling, and we’re providing increased recycling bins on beaches and parks and covered litter bins in areas without access to recycling.

We’re also engaged in global partnerships to help keep plastics out of the ocean. Since 2011, 70 plastics associations from 35 countries have signed onto the [Declaration of the Global Plastics Associations for Solutions on Marine Litter](#), and together, our industry has implemented over [260 projects worldwide](#) to reduce marine litter. We know there’s much more to be done, and our efforts to improve materials management in the U.S. and around the world will continue.”

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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 \$797 billion enterprise and a key element of the nation's economy. It is the nation's largest exporter, accounting for fourteen percent of all 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.*

