



Statement

For Immediate Release

July 24, 2020

Contact: Jennifer Killinger (571) 289-0319

Email: jennifer_killinger@americanchemistry.com

PLASTIC MAKERS WELCOME PEW REPORT, URGE CAUTION WITH SUBSTITUTIONS

WASHINGTON (July 24, 2020) – *The Pew Charitable Trusts yesterday released a report, “Breaking the Plastic Wave: A Comprehensive Assessment of Pathways Towards Stopping Ocean Plastic Pollution.” The American Chemistry Council issued the following statement, which may be attributed to Keith Christman, managing director of plastic markets:*

The American Chemistry Council (ACC) welcomes the release of the Pew Charitable Trusts’ “Breaking the Plastic Wave” report. Plastic waste is a significant, global problem. We believe we can help build a better future by eliminating waste through ongoing public-private commitments, collaboration, innovation, investment.

In its report, Pew correctly highlights a key part of the solution: the urgent need to invest in waste management infrastructure.

ACC supports Pew’s recommendations to develop and expand plastic-to-plastic conversion, or advanced recycling technologies, and eliminate unnecessary packaging, as well as the report’s 2040 goals:

- double mechanical recycling capacity globally,
- scale-up collection rates in middle- and low-income countries,
- reduce waste exports into countries with low collection and high leakage, and
- reduce microplastic leakage.

However, we urge caution in response to Pew’s recommendation to, in some cases, substitute alternative materials for plastic. According to a report prepared by [Trucost](#), replacing plastics in packaging and consumer products with alternative materials could raise environmental costs nearly fourfold, including through significant increases in greenhouse gas emissions.

Plastics help improve hygiene, nutrition and living standards around the world. In working to end plastic waste, we must seek to maintain the societal benefits made possible through plastics while minimizing their environmental impacts.

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America's plastic makers have set a goal for all plastic packaging used in the United States to be reused, recycled or recovered by 2040. In just the past three years, nearly \$5 billion in private-sector investments has been announced to help modernize the U.S. recycling infrastructure and expand the types and volumes of plastics that can be reused or incorporated into a circular economy.

To help address plastic waste globally, plastics makers and many others created the [Alliance to End Plastic Waste](#). Together, the Alliance and its nearly 50 members across the value chain have committed to invest \$1.5 billion over five years toward solutions that will prevent leakage, as well as to recover and create value from used plastics. Alliance investments, which are intended to spark additional financing, are focusing on rapidly developing countries in Asia that account for nearly 60% of the waste entering the ocean.

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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 \$565 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.

