

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 22, 2024

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Brenda Mallory  
Chair  
Council on Environmental Quality  
730 Jackson Place, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Secretary Blinken and Chair Mallory,

We urge you to use U.S. voice and influence to advance an ambitious agreement at the *Fifth Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5)* for a legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, that addresses all aspects of the plastic pollution crisis including plastic production, chemicals of concern and problematic and avoidable products. INC-5 is a singular opportunity for countries to set a pathway to achieve the shared goal of protecting our planet from the harms of plastics and we cannot let a lack of ambition derail it.

While the latest text from Chair Luis Vayas Valdivieso is a clearer basis for negotiations, it threatens to continue the “least common denominator” approach that is insufficient to address the scale and severity of the plastic pollution crisis. Of particular concern, the text lacks global targets for source reduction, a mandatory phase-out of the most harmful chemicals, and a mandatory phase-out of problematic plastic products and those that are easily avoidable. The final agreement must be significantly stronger than the Chair’s text if it is to have the requisite ambition to combat this crisis.

The majority of the world wants an ambitious agreement, and the U.S. should push for rules and procedures that enable robust collaboration and deliberation while ultimately allowing for a majority driven process in order to protect ambition on a meaningful timeline. It is more important to have the majority of countries join a strong agreement predicated on actionable and enforceable commitments, than to have every country join one that does not drive change.

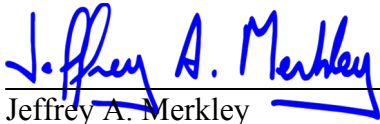
We applaud the updated U.S. negotiating position that supports including provisions to address the full life cycle of plastics, including upstream production.<sup>1</sup> The final agreement should have actionable and enforceable commitments that all parties must take, including lists of polymers, chemicals, and products for bans and phase-outs and time-bound targets for achieving them. We urge you to use your influence to advance these important provisions, even if some countries cannot be an initial party to the agreement.

INC-5 is an unprecedented opportunity for the world to come together to address the plastic pollution crisis and the climate crisis in tandem. We ask you to use U.S. influence to advance an ambitious agreement that includes real, enforceable commitments to reduce plastic production, phase out chemicals of concern and problematic and avoidable uses of plastics across the full life cycle.

Sincerely,


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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/shift-us-backs-global-target-reduce-plastic-production-source-says-2024-08-14/>



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Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



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Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress



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Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



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Peter Welch  
United States Senator