

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 22, 2022

U.S. General Services Administration
1800 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20405

Dear Administrator Carnahan:

We encourage you to enact changes required to reduce single-use plastics across federal government purchasing. By phasing out the procurement and use of single-use plastic products, the General Services Administration will greatly reduce plastic pollution while also advancing President Biden's executive orders on tackling the climate crisis (EO 14008) and federal sustainability (EO 14057).

Plastic pollution is one of the gravest environmental threats of our time. Plastic pollution is driven in large part by the use and disposal of single-use plastics—products that have environmentally sustainable and economically accessible alternatives, including reusable products and packaging.

Plastic production fuels the climate crisis as plastics are derived from fossil fuels, a product of the oil and gas industry. This petrochemical process harms communities with toxic air and water pollution. Once discarded, plastic clogs our rivers and oceans, harms wildlife, infiltrates our drinking water, and persists in the environment for centuries.^{1 2} Plastic is a threat to human health, exposing us to chemicals linked to many of the known public health crises of our time, including many forms of cancer.³ Therefore, as we transition away from fossil fuels toward renewable energy, we must also transition away from producing wasteful single-use plastics.

A recent national poll shows that 8 in 10 American voters support national action to reduce single-use plastic.⁴ There is also growing support in Congress for legislative solutions which would lead to the reduction of single-use plastic pollution, such as the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act (H.R. 2238/S.984), The Plastic Pellet Free Waters Act (H.R.7861/S.1507), and the Reducing Waste in National Parks Act (H.R. 5533/S.2960). Additionally, on World Oceans Day, June 8, 2022, Interior Secretary Deb Haaland issued Order 3047, which directs the Department of the Interior to phase out purchasing and use of single-use plastics across the agency.

¹ Borrelle SB, Ringma J, Law KL, et al. (2020) Predicted growth in plastic waste exceeds efforts to mitigate plastic pollution. *Science* 369: 1515–1518. doi: 10.1126/science.aba3656

² Rillig MC, Kim SW, Kim T-Y and Waldman WR (2021) The Global Plastic Toxicity Debt. *Environmental Science & Technology American Chemical Society*.55: 2717–2719. doi: 10.1021/acs.est.0c07781

³ Gross L and Enck J (2021) Confronting plastic pollution to protect environmental and public health. *PLOS Biology* 19: e3001131. doi: 10.1371/journal.pbio.3001131

⁴ Oceana (February 10, 2022). Oceana Plastic Pollution Survey. *Available at* https://usa.oceana.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/National-Plastics-Polling_Deck_020722_FINAL.pdf. *Press release available at* <https://usa.oceana.org/press-releases/8-in-10-american-voters-support-national-action-to-reduce-single-use-plastic/#:~:text=8%20in%2010%20American%20Voters,Single%2DUse%20Plastic%20%2D%20Oceana%20USA&text=Today%2C%20Oceana%20released%20the%20results,that%20reduce%20single%2Duse%20plastic.>

As the single largest purchaser of goods across the world, the U.S. government has an important opportunity to do the right thing and lead by example. Not only is such a move necessary in light of the climate crisis and environmental justice concerns, a plan to phase out single-use plastics in federal procurement policies also opens the door for a growing community of sustainable product enterprises and a socially and environmentally responsible economy.

We commend your first step toward a rulemaking. We urge you to move as swiftly as possible in this rulemaking process to phase out the procurement and use of single-use plastics across the federal government, while understanding the continued need for purchases relevant to disability accommodations, disaster recovery, medical use, and personal protective equipment. Thank you for your leadership in overseeing the delivery of effective and efficient government services for the American people. We look forward to working together in building a more sustainable nation now and for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



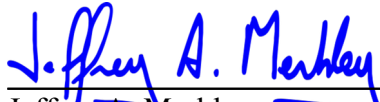
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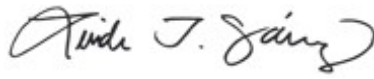
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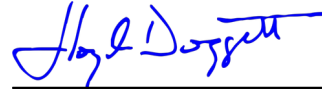
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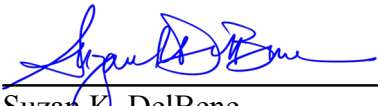
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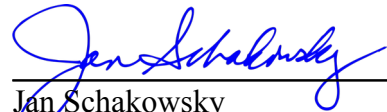
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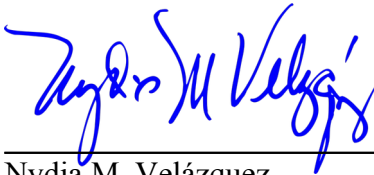
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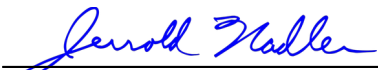
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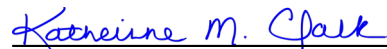
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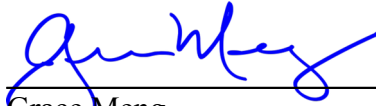
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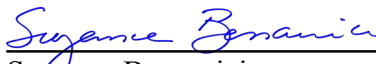
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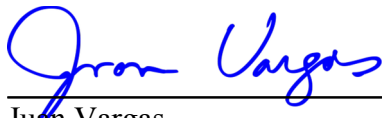
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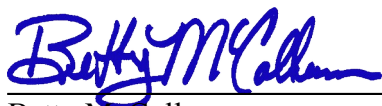
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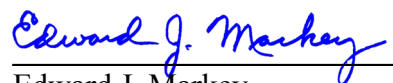
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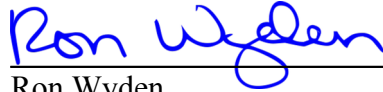
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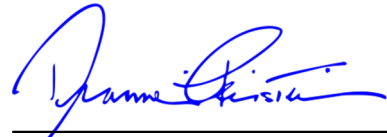
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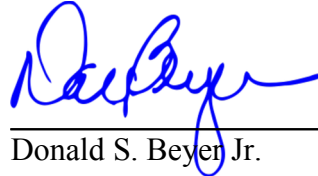
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