

April 16, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman, Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member, Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman, Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Greg Walden
Ranking Member, Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Chairman DeFazio, Chairman Pallone and Ranking Members Graves and Walden,

As members of industries working to improve our nation's recycling systems, we implore you to include H.R. 5115 – the Realizing the Economic Opportunities and Value of Expanding Recycling (RECOVER) Act - in any infrastructure package Congress considers either in response to the COVID-19 pandemic or separately and to invest further. Our nation and economy have taken a hard hit in recent weeks as the nation responds to and recovers from the impact of this international crisis. The recycling industry has not been spared from these hardships. Many localities have reduced/eliminated recycling collection or suspended enforcement of bottle deposit laws, greatly reducing a much-needed manufacturing feedstock. We must keep recycling operating in this country, as recycling is an essential service and consumers are demanding products with more recycled content. In order to meet the demands of this crisis, we need investment now.

Recycling in the United States was already facing a crisis before COVID-19. China implemented their National Sword policy in 2018, preventing the importation of collected materials and sending shock waves through the system. Prices for materials dropped, collected items sat at Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs) or went to landfills due to no viable economic market. Even worse, some localities began removing materials from their curbside collections reversing decades of work to grow this system.

In order to advance and improve this country's recycling infrastructure, The Recycling Partnership estimates in their [State of Curbside Recycling in 2020](#) report an investment of \$9.8 billion is needed. It is important to note that this report was published before the impact of COVID-19. While the current language in the RECOVER Act calls for \$500 million over five years, *we feel the time and need is right to seek a program of \$1 billion*. This immediate investment would start to reverse the current trend of landfilling recyclable materials, which has only been exacerbated by this pandemic. None of us want to see our materials wasted in such a way. With the proper national investment, we can have the system this country demands.

Improving our recycling system is not only the environmentally responsible choice, but the impact on our nation's economy cannot be understated, particularly as the country faces the daunting task of finding work for record numbers of individuals. In the [State of Curbside Recycling in 2020](#) report, it is estimated that:

...if all of the approximately 37.4 million tons of recyclable materials generated in single-family households in the U.S. were collected curbside and delivered back to economic use, it would generate 370,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs. And...it would reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by 96 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, conserve an annual energy

equivalent of 154 million barrels of oil, and achieve the equivalent of taking more than 20 million cars off U.S. highways. (p.6)

Committing investment to the nation's recycling infrastructure makes sense from both an environmental and economic point of view. Investing in recycling infrastructure is also investing in a made-in-the-USA supply chain that supports and creates American jobs in every single state, every single day. To make the kind of impact we need right now, we ask that you use H.R. 5115, the RECOVER Act, as your basis and make that investment at an even higher dollar amount. Doing so would establish a competitive grant program with proper oversight from the Environmental Protection Agency and go a long way towards creating good domestic jobs while positively impacting our environment.

Thank you for your consideration,

American Chemistry Council
AMERIPEN
Association of Plastics Recyclers
Berry Global Group, Inc.
Dow, Inc.
Eastman
Flexible Packaging Association
Glass Packaging Institute
LyondellBasell
Plastics Industry Association
O-I Glass, Inc
The Recycling Partnership
Solid Waste Association of North America
Sustainable Packaging Coalition

Cc:
The Honorable Tony Cárdenas
The Honorable Larry Bucshon