

Bill Number: SB901

Date: March 25, 2025

Position: Support

Dear Chairman Korman and Honorable Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Eastman, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on **SB 901**. As attention increases on the waste crisis, it is vital that representative government, advocates, and private industry collaboratively develop solutions to recycle a broad range of these materials. As a private industry stakeholder, Eastman supports SB 901 and encourages a favorable vote. As written, SB 901 recognizes the need for a material neutral approach to packaging EPR. It will fund necessary developments in recycling infrastructure, help create markets for hard to recycle materials and is inclusive of innovative and truly circular recycling technologies.

As amended, SB 901 allows for material-to-material recycling processes beyond traditional mechanical or manual recycling and recognizes investments made by companies like Eastman to advance truly circular solutions that allow the greatest amount of plastic to be recycled.

A technology-neutral definition of recycling in policy and regulation is vital to address the market need for recycled content and recyclable packaging and, ultimately, drive the shift to a circular economy. Specifically, a definition should include a variety of processes that break down materials, including polymers, into basic building blocks used to produce new materials.

Approximately 300 million tons of plastic are produced globally each year. At end of use, 40% goes to the landfill, 25% is incinerated, and 19% is disposed of in unmanaged dumps or otherwise makes its way into our environment. Only 16% is collected for recycling. Of that 16%, only 9% is successfully recycled in US recycling systems.¹

A narrow definition of recycling that only includes mechanical recycling methodologies would limit the types of plastic suitable for recycling and therefore, not adequately address the growing need to address the waste crisis. As established previously, the traditional recycling system is not equipped to provide the quantity or quality of materials needed to meet recycling goals. It certainly cannot support even more progressive future targets. New, molecular recycling technologies exist to work alongside traditional recycling to support these goals, and a technology-neutral definition for recycling is critical.

¹ www.mckinsey.com/industries/chemicals/our-insights/how-plastics-waste-recycling-could-transform-the-chemical-industry

In certain cases, molecular recycling can be complementary or advantaged to mechanical recycling within the circular economy. These molecular recycling processes should be recognized as the optimum solution from a greenhouse gas and carbon efficiency perspective for managing waste materials when:

- i. The molecular recycling process prevents landfill or incineration of plastics that mechanical recycling cannot process.
- ii. The molecular recycling process utilizes waste materials to directly replace fossil feedstock, enabling value from waste.
- iii. The molecular recycling process has a carbon footprint equivalent to or better than the original manufacturing process for making the same product.
- iv. The molecular recycling process produces products with equivalent or better performance relative to the original process.

Eastman supports a technology-neutral approach to the acceptance of molecular recycling when it meets the criteria and is truly material-to-material and not waste-to-fuel or waste-to-energy. **SB 901** strikes this balance and is representative of broad stakeholder engagement.

Eastman supports investments in recycling infrastructure and incentives for market development. We believe smart EPR policies, like SB 901, that dedicate funding to consumer education and expanding recycling infrastructure are critical in ensuring the highest volumes of plastic waste are recycled.

The global plastic waste crisis is too big and too important for any one organization to solve alone. To create a truly circular economy, where resources retain their value infinitely, our country needs to bring the 65% of waste plastic lost to landfills, incinerators, and the environment back into the production cycle. Technologies exist today that give new life to waste plastic, but without the right policies in place, these solutions will not reach their potential for good. Together, we can create and foster a truly circular economy that addresses the plastic waste crisis at its source. Together, we can shape a sustainable future for the economy that includes plastics that are used, recycled, and reused again and again, supporting, and enhancing our overall quality of life while preserving our environment.

Eastman commends Senator Agustine, the state of Maryland, and the House Environment and Transportation Committee for pursuing the development of responsible recycling policy.

Respectfully submitted,

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