

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB21 – Prohibition on the Chemical Conversion of Plastic**  
**Hearing Date: January 29, 2021**  
**Bill Sponsor: Delegate Love**  
**Committee: Environment and Transportation**  
**Submitting: Liz Feighner, Laurel MD**

**Position: Favorable**

As a concerned resident of District 13, I support HB21 – Prohibition on the Chemical Conversion of Plastic.

I am the green team chair at my church and ran a 6-month campaign on reducing plastic usage, especially single-use plastic. I also volunteer with my local grassroots organization, HoCo Climate Action and we sponsored a webinar and film screening of the documentary, *The Story of Plastic*. We have not only a climate crisis, we have a plastic crisis and need to act to reduce the amount of plastic being produced. According to an International Energy Agency report released in Oct 2018, greenhouse gas emissions from plastics are predicted to sharply rise at a critical time in which we must be reducing emissions. The oil, gas, and petrochemical industries are planning to invest more than \$164 million in the US in order to rapidly expand plastic production by 40% over the next decade.

The oil, gas, and petrochemical industries are trying to convince the public that they can clean up the plastic pollution problem with technology, to quell growing concern about the plastic pollution crisis. This is a distraction tactic to avoid talking about the only safe solution, which is to stop fracking and produce less plastic, especially single-use plastic products.

I volunteered to help pass the ban on fracking back in 2017 and I am thankful that the Maryland legislature had the forethought to ban fracking to protect Marylanders from the anticipated environmental destruction and health harms. The same forethought is needed to prevent the damage from “chemical recycling” or chemical conversion of plastic.

“Chemical Recycling” is a euphemism for another toxic assault on our state. It’s an environmental health hazard particularly to already overburdened communities and workers. Every step of the process produces toxicants, from the sites where the product is burned to the facilities where the waste is sent. The chemical recycling industry is looking to expand into the same neighborhoods suffering most from the fossil fuel industry’s pollution.

“Plastics are the new villain of the climate fight, and elected officials can’t fall for industry’s claims that they have a silver bullet solution, especially when the evidence does not back up those claims,” said Denise Patel, GAIA’s US/Canada program director. “With the rising crises of climate change, pollution, and economic insecurity under the backdrop of a global pandemic, we have no more time or money to waste on dangerous tech-fixes. Policymakers need to fight climate change at the source, by pursuing policies that place limits on production and support zero waste systems.”

We need to ban this dangerous industry just as we banned fracking to protect Marylanders.

I encourage a FAVORABLE report for this essential legislation.

Liz Feighner, Laurel MD, District 13