Bill Title: House Bill 796 Recycling– Prohibition on the Chemical Conversion of Plastic

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Date: February 23, 2026

Position: Oppose

Dear Chairman Korman and Honorable Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Eastman, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill 796 Environment – Recycling – Prohibition on the Chemical Conversion of Plastic (HB 796). As attention increases on the waste plastic 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 has great concern that legislation like HB 796 will stifle the current progress and ultimately result in less plastic being recycled. Eastman supports Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs that seek to fund necessary developments in recycling infrastructure, help create markets for hard to recycle materials and include innovative material to material circular recycling technologies.

HB 796 Will Stifle Recycling Innovation

HB 796 incorrectly excludes truly circular solutions like those practiced by Eastman from the definition of 'recycling'. The definition of "recycling" should prohibit the use of certain technologies for energy and fuel conversion while still allowing for use in a material-to-material capacity. Allowing innovative recycling technologies in the definition will result in the greatest number of plastic materials being recycled and reduce reliance on virgin feedstock.

Approximately 300 million tons of plastic, including those used for single use and durable applications, 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

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

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, material-to-material molecular recycling technologies exist to work alongside traditional recycling to support these goals, and a technology-neutral definition for recycling is critical.

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

Eastman supports a technology-neutral approach to the acceptance of molecular recycling when it meets the above criteria and is truly material-to-material and not waste-to-fuel or waste-to-energy.

Eastman Supports Well-Designed EPR Programs

Eastman supports investments in recycling infrastructure and incentives for market development. We believe smart EPR policies, like the one this body enacted last year, that dedicate funding to consumer education and expanding recycling infrastructure are critical in ensuring the highest volume of plastics, including those used in durable products, are recycled.

The global 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 plastic waste 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 repeatedly, supporting, and enhancing our overall quality of life while preserving our environment.

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