



November 17, 2009

VIA HAND-DELIVERY AND EMAIL

CA Assembly Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials Committee; and

CA Assembly Natural Resources Committee

Attn: Shannon McKinney Shannon.McKinney@asm.ca.gov

Attn: Lawrence Lingbloom Lawrence.Lingbloom@asm.ca.gov

RE: The November 17, 2009 Informational Hearing on “Marine Debris, Its Impacts, and Strategies for Its Reduction.”

Assm. Natural Resources Chair Skinner, Assm. Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials Chair Chesbro, and all Committee Members:

The undersigned nonprofit environmental organizations, representing thousands of constituents statewide, respectfully urge committee members to prioritize marine debris issues and support and endorse the Clean Seas legislation which seeks source reduction of single-use plastics (*See www.cleanseascoalition.org* for a complete list of specific legislation). In addition, we ask that the Committees and membership hold the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) accountable to its mission and require OPC to use its statutory authority to recommend legislation that promotes the priorities set forth in its 2007 Marine Debris Resolution and 2008 Implementation Strategy. We also ask that the Committees and membership support additional legislation to reduce plastic pollution.

As the state’s own research details, we are on the precipice of an unparalleled ecological disaster from the surfeit of single-use plastic. Like climate change, plastic pollution in our oceans and inland waterways is global in reach, and with permanent impact. Moreover, the science on the deleterious human health impacts of plastic continues to emerge. “Dilution” is no longer a solution, and “convenience” packaging is anything but easy.

The Clean Seas Coalition is a growing coalition of environmentalists, scientists, California lawmakers, students, and community leaders working to solve plastic ocean pollution. The Clean Seas Coalition legislation comes directly from the recommendations and policies in the OPC 2007 Marine Debris Resolution and the 2008 Implementation Strategy for Reduction of Ocean Litter. Despite extensive testimony provided at the April 2008 OPC meeting, to date, OPC has not formally supported the legislation.

OPC’s ordaining statute (PRC Section 35615) sets out as one of the very few mandatory duties of the OPC the requirement to: “Identify and recommend to the Legislature changes needed to achieve the goals of this section.” We ask that the Legislature hold OPC accountable to this mandate by discussion of these issues in legislative hearings and public venues such as today’s forum, and by using the budget process or any other reasonable means to support continued action by the OPC to implement its own priorities. Because of the OPC’s focus on this important issue, other states are looking to California to be a leader on marine debris. The West Coast Governor’s Agreement on Ocean Health has highlighted marine debris as a priority issue and is looking to California for leadership on turning marine debris prevention and reduction plans into action.

The legislature and the administration have a responsibility to ensure the OPC Marine Debris Action Plan is implemented as well. Therefore, we urge you to support legislation that will

reduce plastic pollution, including source reduction of single-use plastic packaging. We acknowledge and thank those of you that have sponsored or otherwise supported Clean Seas legislation and other bills that address the health and environmental impacts of plastic pollution. Chair Chesbro, for example, has sponsored AB 283, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework legislation, a bill we consider paramount for keeping California globally economically competitive, as well as environmentally sound and healthy. EPR is effective at shifting costs off of government and onto the producers and consumers to reduce a product's lifecycle impacts. EPR will incentivize business to manufacture and design products to be more durable and repairable, less toxic, and more recyclable. EPR reduces government administration and cost, and creates green jobs.

EPR alone, however, is not a panacea for single use plastics. EPR is just one of several policy tools described in the OPC Strategy on marine litter that are needed to address all of the ocean litter and related human health concerns. For example, there are some products and packaging that are just too deleterious from an environmental perspective, and *thus legislative phase-outs, bans and fees are also imperative*. As with climate change, there is no silver bullet for dealing with the monumental amount of plastics getting into our oceans, our land, our food and our bodies. There is only silver buckshot, and every bullet counts.

Finally, as we have seen with climate change protection and the creation of new, green industries and jobs, there are opportunities for greater economic gain in mandating source reduction of plastics. Local and state government in California will save billions of dollars on solid waste management, litter cleanup, and storm water pollution control. We urge this committee to think proactively, strategically, and long-term to support critical legislation to stem the plastic tide.

Sincerely,



Leslie Tamminen
Ocean Program Director
Seventh Generation Advisors



Miriam Gordan
California Director
Clean Water Action/Clean Water Fund



Miguel Luna
Executive Director
Urban Semillas




Steve Aceti
Executive Director
Calcoast



Tom Ford
Executive Director
Santa Monica Baykeeper

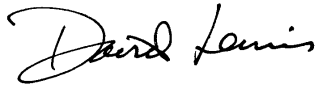


Mark Gold, D. Env.
President
Heal the Bay



Linda Sheehan
Executive Director
California Coastkeeper Alliance

Plastic Pollution Coalition
Lisa Boyle, Co-founder | Dianna Cohen,
Co-founder | Manuel Maqueda, Co-
founder | Daniella Russo, Co-founder



David Lewis
Executive Director of Save the Bay



Bill Sheehan
Executive Director
Product Policy Institute



Anna Cummins
Founder
Bring Your Own



Gina Goodhill
Oceans Advocate
Environment California



Leila Monroe
Ocean Policy Analyst
Natural Resource Defense Council



Rob D'Arcy
Chairman of the Board of Directors
California Product Stewardship Council



Wendy Sommer
Senior Program Manager
Stop Waste



Stuart Moody
President of the Board
Green Sangha

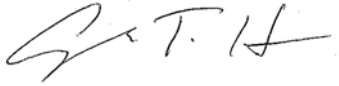


Tina Andolina
Legislative Director
Planning and Conservation League



Alicia Glassco
Marine Debris Coordinator
San Diego Coastkeeper

Christopher Chin
Executive Director
The Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research, and Education

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Howe'.

Angela Howe
Legal Manager
Surfrider

cc:

Assm. ESTM

Shannon McKinney; Wesley Chesbro; Jeff Miller; Mike Davis; Mike Feuer; William Monning; Ira Ruskin; Cameron Smythe.

Assm. NR

Nancy Skinner; Dan Gilmore; Julia Brownley; Wesley Chesbro; Kevin DeLeon; Jerry Hill; Jared Huffman; Steve Knight; Dan Logue.