

WHAT SUPPORTERS ARE SAYING ABOUT BREAK FREE FROM PLASTIC POLLUTION ACT 2020:

Senator Udall (D-NM), joint author of the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act 2020:

“Plastic pollution is a crisis that affects our communities, our waterways, and even our bodies,” Udall said. “Our children are already bearing the cleanup costs of mountains of plastic waste – we have a responsibility to act now to address this problem before future generations are burdened with the overwhelming health and social effects of plastic pollution. Our solutions are not only possible, they are practical and are already being implemented in cities and states across the country, including in my home state of New Mexico. But we need a comprehensive, national strategy to tackle this tidal wave of pollution before it is too late—and drive the innovation necessary to break free from this unnecessary, toxic waste stream that also contributes to climate change. This bill calls on all of us, from companies to communities, to address this crisis head-on so that we can secure a plastic pollution free world.”

Representative Lowenthal (D-CA), joint author of the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act

2020: “Plastic pollution has reached crisis levels globally and for too long we have ignored the issue here in the United States. It is irresponsible for us to ignore this crisis which is choking our waterways and wildlife and impacting our environment and public health. The Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act will tackle the plastic pollution crisis by using proven best practices around the world as well as incorporate important efforts used by State and local governments here in the United States. My legislation, introduced in the Senate by Senator Udall, strips the failing systems currently in place and lifts the financial burden of managing and cleaning up these products away from the municipalities and taxpayers alone and puts the onus on the manufactures and companies who sell the products. Our comprehensive and holistic legislation will create a more robust domestic recycling infrastructure, reduce our dependence on single-use plastics, and more meaningfully protect our communities from the negative impact of these products.”

Judith Enck, Founder, Beyond Plastics and former EPA Regional Administrator

(JudithAEnck@gmail.com): “This is the single most important bill ever introduced in Congress on plastic pollution. Unlike other bills, this legislation advances the most logical and cost-effective approaches to tackling the urgent problems posed by our growing plastic pollution crisis. By promoting policies that will reduce the amount of plastic being produced and littered in our communities and our environment, the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act will address our plastic pollution problem at the source rather than acting as an ineffective bandaid after the fact.”

Jennie Romer, Legal Associate, The Surfrider Foundation’s Plastic Pollution Initiative

(jromer@surfrider.org): “We commend Sen. Udall and Rep. Lowenthal on their commitment to source reduction of plastic pollution in the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act. The bill draws upon successful policies from across the U.S. and around the world to create one very comprehensive bill that focuses on source reduction of certain problematic plastic products, such as bags, straws, and foam. It also emphasizes important bigger picture ideas, namely

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and a pause on new permits for plastic production facilities. We appreciate the inclusive process that they undertook in drafting this bill, gathering input from subject matter experts, including Surfrider Foundation, and circulating drafts for comment.”

Jacqueline Savitz, Chief Policy Officer, Oceana (JSavitz@oceana.org): “It’s high time the United States demands more than just recycling commitments to counter what has become one of the greatest threats to our oceans. This bill would finally tackle the plastic pollution crisis at its source by reducing the amount of single-use plastic produced in the first place, and encouraging a corporate and societal shift to refillable and reusable alternatives. Without federal action, the plastics industry will continue to pump skyrocketing amounts of single-use plastic into the market, leaving taxpayers and local governments with the impossible task of cleaning up the mess. We applaud Sen. Udall and Rep. Lowenthal on their leadership in protecting our oceans and our future by addressing the plastics crisis with real solutions that our country, and our world, so desperately need now, before it’s too late.”

Yvette Arellano, Policy Research and Grassroots Advocate, TEJAS (arellano.inbox@gmail.com): “99% of all plastic is derived from fossil fuels. Houston is home to the largest petrochemical complex in the nation. This bill is the first piece of legislation that makes the impacts of plastic production visible and strives to address it in the most common-sense way. It is sensible to temporarily pause production and assess the cumulative health impacts and update existing Clean Air and Clean Water Act emissions standards. Environmental justice organizers have been asking for this measure for over a decade. When children along the petrochemical complex have increased risk of contracting leukemia because of emissions like 1-3 butadiene a known plastic building block, we have a severe public health crisis. Nothing is worth risking the life of a child. We thank Senator Udall and Representative Lowenthal for addressing the beginning of the plastic lifecycle and for helping us protect our communities that sit next to petrochemical facilities. We must address this issue now because once the infrastructure is in place, it will lock in plastic production for at least the next 40 years.”

Stiv Wilson, Executive Producer, Creator, The Story of Plastic Movie (stivjwilson@gmail.com): “Finally, we as a society are recognizing that to solve plastic pollution, we must reduce the amount of plastic in commerce. Industry wants us to believe that this crisis is caused by bad management and irresponsible consumers; The Breakfree From Plastic Pollution Act changes that narrative, clearly signaling to industry that they need to take responsibility for the pollution they cause.”

Kate Melges, Senior Ocean Plastics Campaigner, Greenpeace (kemelges@greenpeace.org): “This legislation is a game-changer because it comprehensively tackles the issue of single-use plastics. For too long, corporations have diverted blame for the plastic pollution crisis they have created. They have told us that if we just recycle more or participate in beach cleanups that we can turn this around. That has not worked. It is time to end our reliance on single-use plastics and prevent petrochemical companies from locking us into decades of additional plastic production.”

Martin Bourque, Executive Director, Ecology Center Berkeley (martin@ecologycenter.org): “It is clear we cannot recycle our way out of plastic pollution. We need a robust new framework like this bill to focus on reducing waste, not just recycling more. When companies feel they are free to pollute the planet, they do. When the government changes the rules to protect communities and the environment, it works. When we banned Styrofoam and plastic bags, everyone said the world would end- it didn’t. When we put a deposit on bottles and a 25 cent charge on disposable cups, they said it would kill commerce- it didn’t. Today our communities and environment benefit from less litter, and our recycling is cleaner as a result. In the 50 years since the first Earth Day, the Ecology Center has fought to keep recycling true to its original values, this is the first national bill we have seen make a serious effort to achieve that goal.”

Denise Patel, US & Canada Program Director, (denise@no-burn.org): "We are pleased to support the Udall/Lowenthal bill because it provides much-needed reforms to our recycling system, and more importantly, it's the first federal bill that focuses on reducing plastic, not just managing it. We can no longer continue with a 'business-as-usual' approach to plastic that relies on a recycling system that dumps and burns our trash in communities of color both at home and abroad. While US policy focuses on a never-ending expansion of oil and gas for products we don't need, Europe has already passed bold policy to shrink their plastic footprints and China just announced it will ban single use plastics in 2020. It's not just time for the US to catch up, it's an opportunity for the US to reclaim leadership. This bill is a step in the right direction."

Julia Cohen, Co-Founder and Managing Director, Plastic Pollution Coalition, (julia@plasticpollutioncoalition.org): “Global plastic production is drowning humanity in 335 million tons of plastic annually, and it’s still rising, projected to more than TRIPLE by 2050. This will account for 20 percent of all fossil fuels consumed. We have less than two years to redirect the Titanic and prevent potential climate and human health catastrophe. It is time to listen to the science and break free from plastic by supporting the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act of 2020, legislation that will significantly reduce production of single-use plastic, promote upstream reusable solutions, transform the recycling system in the U.S, and reduce harmful environmental and human health impacts. Plastic Pollution Coalition, and our more than 1,200 member groups has been beating the drum to educate the world that plastic pollutes and driving individuals, businesses, organizations, and policymakers to refuse single-use plastic for more than 10 years leading up to this historic moment. This legislation is a HUGE step toward a world free of plastic pollution.”

Jackie Nuñez, Founder and Program Manager, The Last Plastic Straw, (jackie@plasticpollutioncoalition.org) “The Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act is a common sense, comprehensive systems-based approach to the plastic pollution crisis. As an advisor on dozens of local ordinances in the U.S. to limit single-use plastic foodware and drinkware, such as plastic straws, I support this legislation as a critical step in the movement to stop single-use plastic pollution from the source.”

Alex Truelove, Zero Waste Director, U.S. Public Interest Research Group (atruelove@pirg.org)

“Our planet is inundated with plastic pollution, and yet we continue to make more plastic each year, harming our environment and ourselves. Finally, we have a Federal bill that offers real solutions, drawing from successful ordinances across the globe. Undeterred by the many voices trumpeting false solutions, this bill addresses our problem at the source, by reducing the amount of disposable plastic we use, and encouraging a shift towards better and reusable materials. At this moment, it is exactly what we need.”

Diane Wilson, Executive Director, San Antonio Bay Estuarine Waterkeeper (wilsonalamobay@aol.com): “The time has come when we need to say loud and clear: the home needs protecting and the line needs drawing. Enough! No more plastic pollution!!”

Jessica Loya, Director of Policy & Programs, GreenLatinos (jessicaloya@greenlatinos.org):

“Plastic pollution is a public health crisis impacting frontline communities of color along every part of the production chain. We applaud the leadership of Congressman Lowenthal and Senator Udall to ensure that we prioritize the health of our air, water, climate and communities and investigate the impacts of new and expanded plastic-producing facilities.”

Nick Lapis, Director of Advocacy, Californians Against Waste (nicklapis@cawrecycles.org): “This bill marks a huge step forward in the national conversation around plastic pollution, recycling, and zero waste. Many of the policies that are included in this proposal, such as a national bottle deposit, have proven to be incredibly successful in California, generating thousands of jobs while preventing the release of over 41 million tons of greenhouse gases. It is time to take these policies nationwide.”

Annalisa Tuel, Turtle Island Restoration Network (atuel@seaturtles.org): “We must end our plastic addiction now! Plastic pollution impacts critically endangered sea turtles at every stage of their life. It routinely entangles turtles, leading to fin loss and death. It is commonly ingested, which can block digestive tracts, leading to starvation and death. Over 100 million marine animals die each year due to marine debris, and over half of the world’s sea turtles have ingested plastic or human trash.”

Jan Dell, Founder, The Last Beach Cleanup (lastbeachcleanup@gmail.com): “Our country’s plastic waste is our country’s responsibility. This bill will help stop the social and environmental harms caused in communities in other countries by the flood of U.S. plastic waste exports. In 2019 alone, about 440 million kg of U.S. plastic waste was shipped to developing countries. This bill will stop those 83,340 large shipping containers of U.S. plastic waste from polluting the air, land, rivers and beaches of other countries and the ocean we share. We cannot offshore our plastic waste problem any longer.”

Julie Teel Simmonds, Senior Attorney, Center for Biological Diversity

(JTeelSimmonds@biologicaldiversity.org): “Finally, a bill that actually fights plastic pollution and the intertwined climate crisis by holding companies responsible for the massive waste their products create. We have to reject the false solutions the fossil-fueled plastics industry is pushing by phasing out single-use plastic products and halting the industry’s aggressive effort to turn fracked gas into vast amounts of throwaway plastic.”

Jeff Mauk, Executive Director, National Caucus of Environmental Legislators (jmauk@ncel.net):

"State legislators across the country are pleased to see Congress taking the issue of plastic pollution seriously. State lawmakers have been prioritizing single-use plastic pollution to protect their communities from damages and costs of so much unnecessary waste. Many of the policies included in the bill are items states have pushed for as well in the over 220 pieces of legislation pending in 36 states. We look forward to seeing Congress and state legislatures continue working together to address plastic pollution at its source."

Steve Blackledge, Senior Director, Conservation America Campaign, Environment America

(sblackledge@environmentamerica.org): If you want to stop a bathtub from overflowing, you have to turn off the tap. Right now, our rivers and oceans are filling with plastic waste, and whales, sea turtles and other marine wildlife are suffering, if not dying, as a result. The Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act outlines the first comprehensive federal plan to turn off the “plastic pollution tap.” We need this kind of groundbreaking legislation to put wildlife over waste.

Captain Charles Moore, Founder, Algalita Marine Research and Education

(cmoore@algalita.org): The first significant effort at the national level to combat the plague of plastic waste infecting the entire biosphere. Hats off to Congressman Lowenthal and Senator Udall for introducing The Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act.

Sithara Menlon, Junior at the University of California, Los Angeles and Coordinator of the Save Our Seas Campaign for CALPIRG Students (sithara.s.menon@gmail.com):

“Nothing we use for a few minutes should pollute our planet for centuries, yet our plastic waste is doing exactly that. We know that a better future is possible, which is why campuses like UCLA are phasing out single-use plastics altogether. This Federal legislation is an opportunity to build upon our campus successes and help us realize that future nationwide. Now is the time to break free.”

Sam Pearce, Campaign Manager at The Story of Stuff Project (sam@storyofstuff.org):

“We support the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act because, at a time where plastic is enmeshing itself into the fabric of our ecosystems, we need to address the root causes, not the symptoms

of the problem. Senator Udall and Representative Lowenthal's timely legislation offers a path forward by shifting responsibility for the production of runaway single-use plastic back onto the producers."

Steven Feit, Staff Attorney at the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

(sfeit@ciel.org): "The Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) is proud to support the most ambitious proposal to deal with plastic pollution ever introduced in the United States. Plastic is a crisis not only for our oceans, but also for our health, our communities, and our climate. Impacts occur at every stage of the plastic life cycle, from production and manufacturing, to use, disposal, and contamination in the environment. The Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act addresses the whole life cycle of plastic and provides a comprehensive approach to the crisis of plastic proliferation. By avoiding false solutions this legislation provides the United States with a roadmap to a more just and sustainable future. We commend Senator Udall and Representative Lowenthal for their leadership on this critical issue."

Brook Lenker, Executive Director at FracTracker Alliance (lenker@fractracker.org): "In addition to addressing the environmental impacts of pollution, decreasing demand for unnecessary single-use plastic is critical in mitigating the climate crisis. From fossil fuel extraction, transportation, refining, and manufacture, the lifecycle of plastic creates greenhouse gas emissions at a scale that threatens our ability to meet global climate targets. We commend Senator Udall and Representative Lowenthal for their initiative to address the growing problem of plastic pollution."

Genevieve Abedon, Policy Associate, Ecoconsult (genevieve@ecoconsult.biz): "We are amidst a consumption and materials crisis that negatively affects ecosystems and communities, beginning with extraction and continuing through manufacturing, transport, and disposal. This is not just an oceans issue – it contributes to our climate crisis, is expensive for taxpayers and local governments, and threatens wildlife and human health. As the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act would require phase-out of commonly polluting products upstream, and require producers to take responsibility for collecting and recycling materials downstream, this legislation offers a comprehensive solution to help create real change in the system."

Ethan Buckner, Energy Campaigner Earthworks (ebuckner@earthworks.org): "This is the first federal legislation that addresses plastic pollution at the beginning, with the fracked oil and gas it's made from. Lowenthal and Udall's bill would help people across the country fighting petrochemical infrastructure proposed in their communities at the expense of their health and climate."

Vicki Nichols Goldstein, Founder & Director, Inland Ocean Coalition

(Vgoldstein@inlandoceancoalition.org): “How many times have we seen plastic waste in our communities, rivers, and ocean? How many times have we asked ourselves, do we really need that single-use plastic item? And, how often have we thought that it is our responsibility, through reduction, reusing, recycling, and cleanups to address the plastic pollution problem that we are all facing? The Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act 2020 gets to the core of the problem by ensuring that the producers that create the plastic will also be responsible for collecting and recycling it. This Act also puts a temporary hold on new plastic facilities until we better understand their cumulative impacts on our air, water, climate, and communities. This is a piece of legislation that we can all get behind whether we live on the coast or in the heartland. We commend Senator Udall and Representative Lowenthal for this bold national strategy that will be the first of its kind to truly tackle the plastic pollution problem nationwide.”

Dune Ives, Executive Director, Lonely Whale (dune@lonelywhale.org): “We applaud Senator Tom Udall's and Representative Alan Lowenthal's leadership in introducing a comprehensive bill at the national level that addresses the global plastic pollution crisis. We know that 91% of plastic ever produced has not been recycled and that the plastics industry continues to produce over 335 million tons of plastic every year - an amount projected to increase over the coming decades - alongside the staggering 8-12 million metric tonnes of new plastic entering the ocean. The United States is not immune to this crisis nor is it devoid of responsibility. The Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act builds on the amazing, concerted effort of various organizations, communities and state and local governments, and is a substantial step towards addressing plastic pollution at the origin while laying the foundation for a circular economy. Innovative ideas that push the boundaries on current trends in technology, media and advocacy is the way we solve the plastic pollution crisis and positively impact the health of the ocean, but we cannot do it without the support of a strong legislative framework.”

Hannah Testa, Founder, Hannah4Change (www.hannah4change.org): “Finally we have a comprehensive nationwide bill that addresses the issue of plastic pollution. The widespread use of plastic across our nation is choking our landfills, oceans, rivers, and natural environment. Despite plastic pollution being a mainstream topic due to grass-roots campaigns and work at the local level, we cannot solve this environmental and health crisis without the support of the Federal government. I applaud the bold leadership of Senator Tom Udall's and Representative Alan Lowenthal for introducing this bill.”

Melissa Aguayo, Program Director, 5 Gyres (melissa@5gyres.org): “After a decade of research and studying plastic pollution up close in all 5 gyres, it is imperative that we focus on prevention. Plastic isn't just a problem when it ends up in our waterways, it pollutes throughout its entire life cycle. The narrative is shifting, we know we can't recycle ourselves out of this and

with plastic production expected to increase, the time to make change is now. We're grateful for leaders like Sen. Udall and Rep. Lowenthal for introducing the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act, a truly comprehensive bill that will protect the health of our communities and environment by reducing plastic pollution at the source."

Christopher Chin, Executive Director, The Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research, and Education (cchin@coare.org): "Every day, the over abundance of plastic litters our streets, pollutes our streams, and poisons our oceans. It is literally everywhere: in the air that we breath, the water we drink, and in the food we eat. This is the first federal bill to recognize the problem of unrelenting overproduction of plastic rather than simply examining its symptoms. We cannot recycle our way out of this problem, and the time for false solutions and rhetoric is over. COARE commends Sen. Udall and Rep. Lowenthal for their leadership, and we are encouraged by the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act, which finally endeavors to engage Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), to shift the onus of this problem from its victims back to its creators."