



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
REPUBLICANS Frank Lucas, Ranking Member

Opening Statement of Research and Technology Subcommittee Ranking Member Jim Baird, PhD

Subcommittee on Research & Technology Hearing - Closing the Loop: Emerging Technologies in Plastics Recycling

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As prepared for delivery

Good morning Chairwoman Stevens. Thank you for convening today's hearing on Emerging Technologies in Plastics Recycling.

In the 20th Century, American scientists led the invention of synthetic plastic materials. These discoveries were transformative. For the first time human manufacturing was not constrained by the limits of nature.

The creation of plastic also made material wealth more widespread and obtainable.

Now in the 21st Century, we must lead again in the development of new sustainable materials and recycling technologies. Investments in these key areas will ensure a better world for our children and grandchildren.

The plastics industry is one of the largest manufacturing sectors in the United States. The industry accounted for more than \$430 billion in shipments and 989,000 jobs in 2017.

My home state of Indiana has the highest concentration of plastics industry workers in the country, producing nearly \$20 billion in shipments. We have an opportunity to leverage that expertise to develop a new circular economy for the United States-- an economy that produces, recycles, and reuses materials to reduce cost and waste.

We have witnesses today from government, academia and industry who are working together on those advances. I look forward to learning more about the recycling challenges faced by local communities, and new solutions including chemical recycling and applying robotics and artificial intelligence to material sorting. Innovation in these areas will help the environment and the U.S. economy.

We all want clean rivers, lakes and oceans and healthier communities. What my constituents don't want are regulations that would raise the cost of energy, food production, construction, and technology.

Costly regulations, like those proposed in the Green New Deal, would hurt middle- and working-class Americans the most.

One of the wonderful things about the Science Committee is that we are not a regulatory committee. We are the committee of the future, looking to innovation to solve problems.

I'm looking forward to hearing some of those potential solutions today for recycling plastic.

Thank you Madam Chair, I yield back.