



AHOEEG on Marine Litter and Micro-plastics 2018

Item Item 4 - Barriers to combating marine litter and microplastics, including challenges related to resources in developing countries

Intervention by Chelsea Rochman, Ocean Conservancy, Canada

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Thank you madam chair. My name is Chelsea Rochman. I'm here as a delegate of Ocean Conservancy, and am a professor at the Univ of Toronto, and speak on behalf of the 7 majors groups that are coming together to present joint position at this meeting.

Waste management includes materials management. Related to this, we wanted to make a few key points regarding materials management that we think are useful to keep in our minds as we discuss strategy. One is designing products with a full lifecycle in mind, and not producing materials that create barriers to sustainable waste management, namely reuse and recycling, and two is microplastics – materials that are very hard to manage once they are let loose into nature.

Designing for a circular economy includes what polymers plastic products are made out of, and the safety of chemicals used in products. When plastics are produced, we might consider incentives or legal strategies to make sure plastics are designed to be reused and/or recycled – i.e., not just recyclable but that are easy to be recycled in many municipalities and that can be recycled into diverse products. This may include products made out of single polymers, made out of safe polymers and chemicals, and made in a way that can be recycled or reused (for example, not making products black – which can be a barrier

to recycling). This may also include labels on products educating consumers on proper waste management strategies (for example, not flushing plastic wet wipes). We want to stress that the way we make plastic products can form barriers to building a circular economy. So let's consider this.

Next, I want to mention microplastics, generally defined as anything less than 5mm. Of course, policies for macroplastics are relevant to microplastics, but not all. Microplastics have become a global contaminant. Microplastics are more than just a marine litter problem – microplastics are in house dust, sea ice, agricultural soils and freshwater lakes and rivers. Sources of microplastics to the environment include atmospheric transport, wastewater, stormwater runoff, agricultural runoff, and litter. So, we might consider product design to reduce microplastics. This may include tires and textiles with reduced shed rates and made from more inert materials. This may also include best management practices for industrial waste, wastewater and runoff that capture microplastics at the source. I want to stress this because as we think about overcoming barriers for solutions, I want us to remember and keep in mind both macroplastics and microplastics.

Thank you.