



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Subcommittee on Research and Technology Hearing:
*Plastic Waste Reduction and Recycling Research: Moving from Staggering
Statistics to Sustainable Systems*

June 24, 2021

Good morning, and thank you Chairwoman Stevens for holding today's hearing to discuss this important issue. Leaders across the globe are wrestling with the need to reduce plastic waste, and I appreciate Chairwoman Stevens' and Congressman Gonzalez's bipartisan leadership on the legislation they introduced supporting research and development activities to help reduce plastic waste.

Communities across the country, including my district in Dallas, Texas, are trying to find solutions to deal with the increasing levels of plastic waste. The statistics concerning plastic pollution are indeed staggering. In 2018, plastic was the third largest source of municipal solid waste in the U.S. In that year alone, we generated 35.7 million tons of plastic waste, recycled 3 million tons, combusted 5.6 million tons, and put 27 million tons of plastic waste in landfills.

These statistics make it an imperative to support research that can help us move forward in a more sustainable way. Experts agree that no single solution will solve the plastic waste crisis. We must have an all-of-the-above approach. To that end, it is important to understand barriers to the current recycling system, the potential for upstream solutions, and what research, technology, and data gaps we need to fill. Also critical is understanding the need for standards development and new assessment models to help us achieve sustainable systems.

Collaboration will be key between federal agencies, State and local governments, academia, the private sector, and international partners. Today's hearing is an important step in working towards achieving sustainability goals for our environment, and I look forward to the discussion and our witnesses' testimony.

Thank you.