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June 23, 2021

The Honorable Haley Stevens  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Research and Technology  
House Committee Science, Space and Technology  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Anthony Gonzales  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2458 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Stevens and Representative Gonzales,

The National League of Cities (NLC) would like to thank you for your leadership in sponsoring The Plastic Waste Reduction and Recycling Research Act (H.R. 2821). We greatly appreciate your efforts to invest in and develop domestic recycling infrastructure and policies throughout the United States. This legislation will give way to new resources for cities, towns and villages across the U.S. to help lead the charge in reimagining waste reduction and recycling in our communities.

Waste collection and recycling services are some of the most basic and essential functions of local governments. The system we have today, however, is not sustainable environmentally or economically, which has become more evident since China's National Sword Policy and the coronavirus pandemic. We have seen both sides of the spectrum when it comes to waste reduction and recycling in recent years—from some smaller communities struggling to establish and maintain existing recycling programs to some urban communities strengthening and expanding the capacity of their recycling programs.

NLC has been supporting cities, towns and villages with the challenges they are facing, including through our municipal action guide, *Rethinking Recycling: How Cities Can Adapt to Evolving Markets*. At the core of reimagining our recycling system is a need to improve technology and support research and development to reduce, reuse and recycle plastic waste, which The Plastic Reduction and Recycling Act can help accomplish. Additionally, we have seen the importance of a data driven approach when it comes to local issues. A research and development-based orientation towards waste reduction and recycling will be extremely beneficial to local governments across the U.S. Investing in research into the various intricacies of recycling whether it be recyclability, plastic use, upcycling, microplastics etc. will be critical to the development of both short- and long-term sustainable practices that will help keep our communities green and our economies growing.

Local governments can help lead the charge in ensuring U.S. leadership when it comes to waste reduction and recycling, which is why this legislation is so important. The mobilization of a "Plastic Waste Reduction and Recycling Research Program" alongside interagency cooperation among the National Institute for Standards and Technology, National Science Foundation, U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will allow for the creation of more holistic and comprehensive solutions and resources that can be utilized by communities across the

U.S. Each of the participating agencies brings a unique perspective to the table, and their respective R&D will be crucial to reimagining and enhancing what waste management looks like in our cities, towns and villages. There are a lot of academic, environmental and economic opportunities when it comes to sustainable waste management and exploring them will allow the U.S. to carve its pathway as an international leader and role model in waste reduction and recycling.

NLC will be releasing a policy report later this summer on systemic challenges and proposed principles to guide policy, which we will be pleased to share with the committee when it is final. Once again, thank you for championing The Plastic Waste Reduction and Recycling Research Act. We look forward to working with you to advance this legislation and on other issues important to America's cities, towns, and villages. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this legislation further, please reach out to our Legislative Director for Sustainability, Carolyn Berndt, at [berndt@nlc.org](mailto:berndt@nlc.org).

Sincerely,



Clarence E. Anthony  
CEO and Executive Director

Cc:

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson, Chairwoman, House Committee on Science, Space and Technology

The Honorable Frank Lucas, Ranking Member, House Committee on Science, Space and Technology