

Matt Chapman, Director, Waste Management and Prevention
Testimony to House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife
February 11, 2022

General Comments

- General agreement that there is too much in the way of packaging and plastic entering into the environment. Even if we are uncertain on the health or environmental effects it is a practice that needs to be controlled.
- The strikeall amendment focuses on a single aspect of having an overabundance of plastic in the environment. It does not direct the Agency to look more broadly at the numerous sources of plastic contamination entering our organics management stream.
- I would offer that the objectives of this bill would be better served by directing the Agency to focus limited staff resources on making recommendations related to how to reduce the amount and toxicity of packaging; how to increase the recyclability of packaging; and increase the recycled content in packaging.

Specific Comments

Sec. 1

- I would recommend that you strike the prohibition on the Agency amending the certification of an existing depackaging facility. As written, this limitation would prevent the Agency from adopting new or additional requirements for reporting or testing that may be necessary to accomplish other provisions of this bill. It would also prevent the Agency from requiring any operational changes that may be necessary.

Sec. 2.

- I would ask that the Committee consider reframing this study to address the problem with plastic packaging generally.
- If the Committee wants to focus on microplastics at the end of the process, I recommend that the study be broadened to include an assessment of other sources of microplastics in our organics waste management system including leaf and yard waste, post-consumer food waste, as well as developing an understanding of what constitutes a background level in an agricultural setting.
- I am concerned that without this broader approach and in light of the development of data on emerging contaminants that we will not obtain useful information with a study this narrow.

Sec. 3.

- This section establishes the framework for what the Agency is required to adopt rules on before we have the benefit of the results of the study required by Section 2. I would recommend that you incorporate any recommendation for rulemaking or legislative change

into the study so that the Committee can act based on the information obtained from the study.