



**By Electronic Mail**

August 31, 2020

The Biden for President Campaign  
1500 Market St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Vice President Biden and team:

I write to you today on behalf of the manufacturers representing the consumer packaged goods (CPG) industry — the makers of the food, beverage, household cleaning and personal care products Americans rely on every day. As you look to chart the future for our country — specifically as it relates to the environment — the country's antiquated and broken recycling system offers an opportunity to make a real impact.

While COVID-19 has led to the demand for more single-use materials, the industry remains focused on the long term and what must be done to ensure Americans can easily recycle the packaging that's instrumental in safely getting them essential products. If anything, recycling has become more important during the pandemic. In a recent [Consumer Brands poll](#), half (50%) of Americans said recycling is more critical now to handle the increase in single-use plastic and packaging; 42 percent say it is equally as important as before.

With nearly ten thousand individual systems, all with different rules and standards, recycling in the United States isn't working as it should — confusing consumers and preventing economies of scale. This confusion has contributed to only 11 percent of Americans believing that recycling systems are doing the best they can.

The CPG industry holds itself accountable and stands ready to support a lasting, functional system that successfully returns materials back into the ecosystem. All of the 25 largest CPG companies have already made substantial commitments to make their packaging more sustainable, yet we recognize there's more work to do. We also recognize that no single industry can solve this problem alone.



American consumers are also holding themselves accountable, placing themselves at the top of the list of stakeholders that must be part of the solution to the United States' plastic and packaging waste crisis. But the system is failing them, rather than enabling them to do so.

Meaningful and lasting change demands that every industry stakeholder be part of a holistic and honest assessment of the system. If we're not all in, recycling will be out. Recently China, historically the single-largest buyer of U.S. recyclables, closed its doors to the United States, exposing a lack of capacity and infrastructure here in America. This is an opportunity for the entire value chain to reimagine a successful 21<sup>st</sup> century recycling system that is both economical and sustainable.

To that end, in January, we launched the [Recycling Leadership Council](#), with members representing consumer-facing industries, NGOs and academia, all of whom are committed to fixing the system and are collaborating to create a federal policy roadmap for the future. In April, we released our first [recycling policy platform](#) with our industry's recommendations for achieving an optimal recycling system. Then, in June, I testified before a [Senate committee hearing](#) highlighting the industry's positive position on packaging sustainability and the desperate need for a functioning system.

We urge you to make fixing America's recycling infrastructure a key component of your environmental policy and infrastructure development platform and hope you'll consider these ideas to do so. Consumer Brands' policy platform outlines three elements to fixing the recycling system — standardization, financing to drive specific outcomes and end-market development. One critical piece that could be part of your platform is standardized data collection. Currently, there is no standardized or required recycling data at the national level. Some states and municipalities mandate recycling reporting, but most do not. In fact, the EPA's recycling stakeholder process found that "recycling" or "recycled" is defined 18 different ways around the country. As the saying goes, we cannot manage what we cannot measure. And we cannot make progress until we know where we're starting from.

Recycling in our country is broken, but it's not beyond repair. We hope you'll join us in giving it the attention it deserves to create jobs and bring about a more sustainable future for our country.



Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Stasz", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Meghan Stasz  
Vice President, Packaging and Sustainability  
Consumer Brands Association