

# Same Vision, Different Solutions: Mapping the Common Ground on Sustainability Goals for Plastics

From increasing [accessibility to and affordability](#) of consumer products to supporting vital [construction](#), [automotive](#) and [health sector](#) applications—alongside countless other uses—plastics’ unique durability and versatility make the world we know today possible, while also offering [significant sustainability benefits](#) over alternative materials. Nevertheless, keeping more plastics in the economy and out of landfills remains a challenge—and opportunity—for all involved.

Plastics industry critics often demonize plastics in an attempt to promote “environmental friendliness,” yet these misguided attempts completely disregard common ground that must be leveraged to cultivate real progress towards a sustainable future.

Despite these claims, the plastics industry and its should-be allies actually possess a shared vision for a more sustainable future. Take a closer look:

CRITICS	PLASTICS INDUSTRY	SHARED VISION
<i>Reducing plastic waste</i>		
Critics <a href="#">often advocate</a> for bans on plastic products and production to <b>lessen environmental degradation attributed to plastic waste in the environment and waterways</b> .	The plastics industry has spent <b>decades investing billions of dollars into minimizing the environmental impact of its products</b> , developing innovative designs to make products more environmentally friendly and solutions to tackle plastic waste in the <a href="#">ocean</a> , <a href="#">waterways</a> and the <a href="#">environment</a> .	Both the plastics industry and its critics agree that <b>plastics do not belong in the environment</b> .
<i>Increasing recycling and material recovery</i>		
Critics <a href="#">note that too many useful materials unnecessarily end up in landfills</a> , yet they often encourage use of alternative materials that produce more <a href="#">emissions and use more water and resources during manufacture</a> than plastics.	The plastics industry understands the benefits that both <a href="#">recycled and virgin plastics</a> bring to the circular economy. Innovative plastics industry actors are <b>constantly investing in advanced recycling</b> and other innovative technologies to complement existing recycling infrastructure and leverage the power and opportunity of post-consumer plastic products.	Both the plastics industry and its critics agree that <b>useful materials should be recovered, reused and repurposed</b> .
<i>Building a circular economy</i>		
Critics recognize the benefits of <b>increasing economic circularity to reduce waste</b> , yet they often advocate for <a href="#">eliminating certain materials</a> like single-use plastics from this process altogether.	Leveraging the informative power of <a href="#">life cycle analyses (LCAs)</a> , the plastics industry <a href="#">supports initiatives</a> that aim to ensure both commonly used and complex plastic products have <b>healthy end markets beyond their original applications</b> , creating an <b>infinite life cycle</b> for every type of plastic.	Both the plastics industry and its critics support <b>advancing a circular economy to reduce waste and promote sustainability</b> .

The plastics industry and its critics are clearly aligned on core ideals that aim to create a greener, more circular future. Where critics fall short, however, is by categorically condemning such a critical class of materials through proposed bans, fees and unnecessary restrictions.

Real solutions to complex problems require multi-stakeholder engagement. If the United States is to advance sustainability for plastics, all parties must be at the table, not banned outright.