

**Statement by the Endocrine Society In regard to the Ad hoc open-ended working group (OEWG)
to prepare for the intergovernmental negotiating committee on plastic pollution**

May 30, 2022

Dear Government Delegates,

My name is Leonardo Trasande. I am a practicing pediatrician and epidemiologist at New York University's Grossman School of Medicine. I am speaking here today on behalf of the Endocrine Society, the world's oldest, largest, and most active organization devoted to research on hormones and the clinical practice of endocrinology. Its membership consists of over 18,000 scientists, physicians, educators, nurses, and students in more than 100 countries.

The Endocrine Society has led the scientific community in describing the effects of synthetic chemicals on our hormones, our natural signaling molecules which underlie basic biological functions such as temperature, metabolism, salt, sugar and even sex.

Plastics are a crucial source of endocrine disrupting chemical, known as EDCs. These include bisphenols used in polycarbonate plastics and aluminum can linings, phthalates used in soft plastic food packaging, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (known as PFAS) used in fluoropolymer plastics, and brominated flame retardants, which are additives used to reduce flammability. Burning plastics also creates dioxins, known carcinogens and severe health risks.

The evidence of the human health impacts of many chemicals in common plastics is clear and extensive. The Endocrine Society published two scientific statements documenting the effects of plastic chemicals and other EDCs in 2009 and 2015. These chemicals contribute to noncommunicable diseases including obesity, diabetes, heart attacks, stroke and certain cancers. Other scientific organizations which have raised the alarm about chemicals used in plastic materials include the International Federation of Gynecologists and Obstetricians, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the World Obesity Federation.

The economic costs of disease due to chemicals in plastic materials are also substantial, as documented in peer reviewed studies. Endocrine disrupting chemicals cost Europe 163 billion Euro, or 1.2% of its gross domestic product. In the US the costs are even higher, 340 billion US dollars, or 2.3% of its GDP. These differences are driven substantially by chemicals used in plastics, and driven by gaps in regulation which increase exposure to EDCs. The costs have also been documented in industrializing nations. Data from 70 countries suggest exposure to PFAS contributed to approximately over 460,000 cases per year of LBW during the past two decades.



A plastics treaty is a global health treaty. Scientific and medical engagement in the negotiation of the international plastics treaty is therefore crucial. The Endocrine Society is delighted to contribute the latest science about the effects of chemicals in plastic materials. We thank you for the opportunity to intervene today.

Sincerely,

Leonardo Trasande, MD, MPP