



Principles for the Incorporation of Bio-Based Plastics in Manufacturing

Bio-based plastics have the potential to reduce greenhouse gas impacts and displace fossil resources with renewable resources throughout the supply chain. The American Chemistry Council's Plastics Division has developed these principles to promote policies that support responsible growth of commercially available and viable bio-based plastics production, as well as bolster solutions that help American companies reach their sustainability goals more rapidly.

For these principles, bio-based plastics are partially or fully derived from materials of biological origin and must be capable of being produced at an industrial scale. Segregated and mass balance chain of custody processes are included in these principles. Fossil-based compostable/biodegradable plastics are out of scope.

Collaboration Between Government, Academia and Industry



Incentives:

Any government investment, production incentives or credits should be designed to provide a level playing field with other biogenic product market incentives across the value chain and for all in-scope bio-based plastics.



R&D:

Industry should be consulted in the process for targeting R&D funding, with science-based decision making and commercialization as goals.



Procurement and Promotion:

Ensure that use of bio-based plastics in public procurement can fulfill government sustainability commitments, expand resources for the USDA BioPreferred procurement and labelling program, and amend the FTC Green Guides to recognize bio-based plastics in the context of overall plastics circularity.



Policy



Data:

Support a defined federal role to enable comprehensive data classification (NAICS), collection and reporting.



Decision Making:

Use science and data-based decision making across all materials to support regulatory and policy alignment across levels of government. The potential benefits of including embedded biogenic carbon credits in product life cycle analyses should also be considered.



Jurisdiction Alignment:

Advocate for policy alignment across international, federal, state, tribal and local jurisdictions to recognize global supply chains and information flow.



Goals:

Develop ambitions for bio-based plastics in coordination with other federal goals and targets for chemical and plastics circularity; and ensure both recycled and bio-based plastics are counted as potential contributors towards a circular economy.



Standards:

Establish standards for harmonized feedstock sustainability criteria; plastic including biogenic content streams to be classified as “bio-based plastic”; and harmonized methodology for determining the percentage of biogenic content that should be based on internationally recognized, auditable and transparent third-party certification systems.



Certification:

Environmental benefits claims are to comply with applicable governmental rules, and independent third-party certification systems should be recognized for their role in helping to support such claims.

Feedstock



Availability and Access:

Focus domestic research funding to develop more diverse feedstocks at scale and ensure a level playing field for access to feedstocks for bio-based plastics production.



Eligibility:

Ensure cooperation of bio-based feedstock sourcing methodologies with sustainable agriculture principles, including food competition questions and social impact.

