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The Hon. Melanie Schultz van Haegen- Maas Geesteranus
Minister of Infrastructure and the Environment
Plesmanweg 1-6
2597 JG The Hague
P.O. Box 20901
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April 26th, 2016

Re: E.U. Circular Economy Package

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you in your capacity as the Netherlands EU Presidency Chair of the Council of Environment Ministers.

I am sure you are being swamped with letters and appointments with people lobbying for changes to the Circular Economy Package (CEP). I don't wish to add to your burden but do feel it is appropriate that we point out some perspectives which, I am sure you understand, are dear to interests of our members in the UK and I feel to the wider community.

Our members make products related to bio-based and biodegradable characteristics- be they lubricants that are biodegradable for motors and engines; or non-invasive insecticides made from vegetable extracts rather than traditional chemicals; insulating materials, paints and coatings, surfactants; or biopolymers to make products once made from petroleum based plastics. These are very innovative industries, exploring the frontline between new feedstocks, cleaner production, new products and materials.

The CEP is a unique opportunity to drive forward environmental protection over the next two decades in Europe. This opportunity should not be missed and a strong CEP will be welcomed by almost all those working in the fields of waste and resource management, bioeconomy, and innovative technologies. It will of course be opposed by those thinking that new targets or regulations are an unnecessary obstacle to their businesses. Some Governments will stress to you that new targets involve increasing costs and more work for them. Environmental progress has always faced opposition and today is no exception (remember lead in petrol?). To maintain Europe's leadership in environmentally friendly industrial development, a strong CEP is needed.

You have it within your power to improve some elements of the package to reinforce it.

1. The provisions subjecting biowaste collection to T.E.E.P.* conditionalities are a mistake. This means thousands of communities will not collect biowaste because objectively, it requires a change in the organisation of collection systems many operators and municipalities would prefer to avoid. Biowaste is the largest single stream in MSW and among the most polluting.



Yet good quality soil improvers made from biowaste are necessary to combat increasing desertification and impoverishment of our soils. We welcome the new Fertilisers Regulation now being finalised, but to ensure good quality organic carbon matter gets back to soil we need to intercept biowaste with separate collection. This should be obligatory throughout the E.U. by 2020 at least in municipalities with a greater than (for example) 10,000 population or for sites producing more than (for example) 500 kgs per annum (restaurants, canteens, hotels, food processing, supermarkets etc).

2. The definition of biowaste needs to be broadened. At present materials and products made to decompose in industrial (or even domestic) composting, are not included in the definition. This hinders the collection and treatment of compostable materials (certified EN13432) and therefore is a barrier to their production. Compostable materials in packaging for instance, can be used to raise levels of biowaste interception, as Italy and parts of the UK have shown clearly. So we need to include in the definition of biowaste packaging materials that are compostable according to the EN13432 standard. This will also strengthen European industries producing such materials, and Europe is still a leader.
3. On definitions a simple clause missing is the definition of organic recycling. In the revision of the WFD we need to define organic recycling as composting and anaerobic digestion, on a par with other forms of mechanical recycling.
4. And finally we risk missing an enormous opportunity to drive product re-design and reduce product impacts on the environment through Green Public Procurement standards and criteria. The USA Preferred Purchasing Programme for bio-based materials introduced in 2002 has driven an industry now worth US\$370bn and over 4 million direct and indirect jobs, at zero cost to the taxpayer and with over 14,000 products registered in the programme. As the Commission's own Bio-based expert group has said, GPP is a way forward to create markets and develop a European industrial bioeconomy (attached).

Recognising the differences with the USA, it would be interesting to adopt such a template.

I thank you Minister for your attention and wish you every success in making progress towards a legislative instrument which will set the pace for European industries over the next two decades. Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Yours sincerely,

David Newman
Managing Director

BIO-Based and Biodegradable Industries Association Ltd



CC:

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The Hon. Simona Bonafè, MEP, Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
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The Hon. Karmenu Vella, E.U. Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
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*Technically, economically and environmentally practical