

The Rt. Hon. Theresa Villiers MP
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Mr. Michael Laurier,
Chief Executive,
Symphony Environmental Technologies Plc.,
6 Elstree Gate,
Borehamwood WD6 1JD.

29th October 2020

Dear Mr. Laurier,

One of my constituents, your employee, Mrs. Paula Hickford, has drawn my attention to a serious difficulties facing your company.

We are all aware that plastic which has escaped into the open environment as litter is causing a serious problem, and that governments are taking measures to reduce the amount. Nevertheless it is realistic to expect that despite those measures a significant amount of plastic will continue to get into the open environment from which it cannot easily be collected for recycling or anything else.

I gather that your company has sought to address this problem by developing a type of plastic known as “oxo-biodegradable,” which converts into non-toxic biodegradable materials if it gets into the open environment, without any need to collect it and take it to a composting facility.

I am also aware that by Directive 2019/904 the EU has banned “oxo-degradable” plastic as from July 2021 because they think it creates microplastics, but they have not distinguished oxo-degradable from oxo-BIOdegradable plastic. I am concerned that having commenced the process required by REACH before any substance can be banned, the EU did not complete the process and imposed the ban notwithstanding that their own scientific experts (ECHA) advised that they are not convinced that microplastics are formed.

My constituent has indicated that confusion caused by this legislation is unfairly damaging your business, not only in the EU, but elsewhere in the world where the EU is seeking to persuade governments to follow them and impose the same ban.

I am therefore writing to say that as a former UK Secretary of State for the Environment I see no justification for banning oxo-BIOdegradable plastic.

In fact I consider this technology can play a positive role in tackling plastics pollution because it enables everyday plastics to biodegrade safely and quickly if they get into the open environment.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Theresia Van". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.