

Sarah Paiji Yoo, Co-Founder and CEO of Blueland — Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act Written Testimony

My name is Sarah Paiji Yoo and I am the Co-Founder and CEO of Blueland — a mission-driven company reimagining household products to eliminate single-use plastic and provide consumers with sustainable options that are convenient, effective and affordable. I currently live in New York City, which is also the headquarters of Blueland.

I came up with the idea of Blueland's first set of products when I became a new mom. When I was transitioning from breastfeeding to formula-feeding my oldest son, I began doing research and was horrified to learn how many microplastics are in both our tap water and bottled water. I was deeply concerned about using this water to make my son's formula and, as a result, I decided to reduce my personal plastic consumption. I soon realized how difficult it actually is to do so since many household items use single-use plastic in their packaging.

After doing my own research following the discovery of microplastics in our water, my interest and passion for eliminating plastic waste grew exponentially. I was determined to find a better solution to eliminate wasteful plastic packaging from household products without sacrificing efficacy. I specifically wanted to focus on microplastics and the growing concern of them as we uncovered more about what this meant for humans and for the planet. Plastic was initially meant to last *forever*, but most of it is only *used once*. Much of it enters our oceans, and that has toxic effects on everyone. We're eating a credit card's worth of plastic each week and 90% of the water we drink and the food we eat contain microplastics. We're also damaging our wildlife and polluting our oceans—plastic has been found in 100% of marine turtles, 59% of whales, 36% of seals and 40% of seabird species examined. By 2050, scientists predict that the ocean will contain more plastic by weight than fish.

This ultimately is what led me to found Blueland, as no one should have to sacrifice a clean home for a clean planet. We were excited to start with cleaning products because they're products that people need and frequently replenish. We also loved the challenge of not only eliminating single-use plastic, but tackling the inefficiency and carbon emissions of shipping water and the challenge of re-thinking a product we use every day to be designed to work with the planet's resources.

At Blueland, we strongly believe in the importance of the refill and reuse method, and creating industry change that moves the world away from one of single-use to reuse. To really accelerate that change, we've worked tirelessly to ensure we're also removing common barriers consumers cite about why they haven't made the switch. All of our products are designed in tablet or

powder form, to be mixed with household tap water so that it's easy for consumers to refill and reuse our products and they can save on money and space, while also saving the planet. The dry tablets are compact, can be purchased in bulk without taking up a ton of space and all someone has to do is drop the tablet into our reusable bottle to create a new full bottle of cleaner. With that one innovation we've eliminated barriers around ease of use and space among others.

Packaging is the largest generator—46%—of all plastic waste, and the personal care industry is among the largest producers – creating more than 120 billion units of packaging every year globally. If we were to reuse just 10% of those products, we could prevent almost half of the annual plastic ocean waste. Only 5% of plastic is actually recycled, and when packaging isn't curbside recyclable it typically ends up in landfills, incinerators or in the ocean.

So many of our most everyday consumable products come in plastic packaging that are designed to be discarded after use. While some of these plastic containers are accepted for recycling, much of our recycled plastic now has no end use. That's because China, which used to be the largest destination for global recycled plastic, stopped accepting most all recycled plastics in 2018. As a result, many cities have diverted recycled plastic to landfills or are dropping plastic from their recycling collection program. It is wasteful and resource intensive to create packaging and products that are used just once, and I strongly believe that reuse and refill is the future of product delivery.

There is a strong consumer shift from a single-use culture to one of reuse and simply consuming less. We are focused on empowering and inspiring consumers to not just buy eco-friendly products, but to show them that leading more conscious lifestyles does not add layers of difficulty, and can more often than not, provide ease (space saving, cost effective, etc.). Most refill models are not as sustainable as they seem because most refills are liquid form and therefore, need to be packaged in plastic or glass containers. With the introduction of a solid form refill like powder or tablets, refills can be packaged in paper-based compostable packaging that is compostable for a truly zero waste solution.

Our mission and vision extend beyond selling eco-friendly products—we aim to create a world in which businesses and consumers are active stewards of the planet through thoughtful and responsible production and consumption. On the business side, we are building a business with the highest standards of sustainability across our value chain – every single ingredient and material is evaluated at the molecular level and all of our operations and partners are held to the highest standards of social and environmental performance, transparency, and accountability.

We are striving to re-define and exemplify what it means to build a global business whose operations are in balance with nature by (1) using chemistries and materials that are biological and biodegradable as well as rapidly renewable, (2) working to eliminate petroleum inputs from

all of our chemistries and operations, and (3) minimizing Blueland's impact on the planet to the point of zero by, for example, purchasing carbon offsets in instances where achieving zero carbon emissions is not possible with today's technology (i.e. DTC shipping) and sourcing recycled materials and/or certified sustainably sourced materials along with biodiversity conservation measures where practicable (i.e. conservation in light of palm oil use). Additionally, water-based ink as an alternative doesn't require solvents during the printing process thereby avoiding VOCs, meaning less toxic printing and lower carbon emissions. Water based ink alternatives can also lower carbon footprint associated with raw materials, alleviate toxicity concerns during printing and improve the recyclability of paper, especially during the de-inking process.

There are many steps that businesses can take to minimize waste and get their packaging to be reusable or refillable. It starts with re-evaluating all the elements of their supply chain and packaging materials and making the necessary changes. Newer materials are continuing to become more and more prevalent and cheaper as demand for eco-friendly alternatives continues to grow. Contrary to what most might think, switching to reusable and refillable packaging can actually drive more revenue given over 80% of consumers are interested in using less plastic. This can also drive higher margins for businesses because of less materials needed which dramatically reduces the weight and size footprint of products.

In just 4 years since launch, Blueland has sold over 10 million products to over 1 million customers. We're proud to be one of the many examples that show the possibility of moving beyond single-use plastic, while also building a large and successful business and offering an incredible consumer experience. We hope that our success as a brand and the large audience our mission has attracted, motivates other businesses to also prioritize people and the planet and hope that our growth and financial success shows that there is a false paradox that purpose and profit are mutually exclusive.

This bill is paving the path for a better future for our planet and the generations to come. I'm thankful to be able to speak on this matter, show my support for this bill, and urge businesses to do better for the planet, and ultimately—their customers.