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TRANSCRIPT  
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## **“A Conversation with U.S. Senator Tom Udall on Addressing Plastic Waste”**

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SPEAKERS  
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*U.S. Senator for New Mexico*

MODERATOR  
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Whitley Saumweber:

Are we on? Great. Let's give the last few folks a minute to come inside here. All right. Well, thank you all for coming today. We really appreciate it. Before we get started, I'm going to take the traditional role of Dr. Hamre here, and just point out that in the event of – highly unlikely event of an emergency we have our exit here. Just head back out, down the stairs, and out the front door, and around the corner to the National Geographic building. That's our gathering place. And we will buy everybody tickets. (Laughter.) That's our usual mode of operation here, there should there be something unforeseen.

So thank you very much for coming here today. I'm Whit Saumweber. I'm the director of the Stephenson Ocean Security Project here at CSIS. And we are delighted to welcome Senator Udall today to talk about his new plastics bill, the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act. And I should mention a few things, that Senator Udall is finishing out his term in the Senate this year and is moving onto new and exciting things. He has, of course, served in the Senate and Congress for over two decades, and has really been a leader on environmental issues throughout that time. We were just in the back discussing how he really grew up in this space, carrying a placard for his dad since the age of five years old. Of course, his dad being Secretary Udall, who led on environmental issues for so long himself. So really a long legacy of environmental leadership from the senator. And we are delighted that he is here today to talk about his new bill.

So like many environmental issues, plastics management is exceedingly complex. Plastics serve a purpose, of course, in all of our everyday lives. It makes – it employs a huge number of people around the globe in its production. And we use these products every day. And from the mundane to the complex. But plastics also pollute our waterways, they damage our health, and they harm already-struggling ecosystems as they become embedded in soil, plants, animals, the ocean, us. Each year, 8 million tons of plastic escape into the ocean. That's enough to cover the world's coastlines in a layer five garbage-bags deal, which is crazy. That's a huge, staggering amount of volume, if you actually think about it.

I have actually myself been out at sea doing ocean research, towed nets in that mythical spot 300 miles south of nowhere and found small microplastics almost exceeding the volume of animal life in the net tows, out in the middle of the ocean. So it really is truly everywhere. It's something that has become a global challenge, all encompassing. And so it's really wonderful that Senator Udall has taken up the mantle of leadership to advance policy solutions on this really complex challenge. So I'd like to welcome the Senator to the stage to talk about his bill. After that, we will have a conversation. I'll take – I'll lead off the conversation with some questions with the Senator, but you all should have some notecards on your seats that you can pass up during the discussion. And we'll move forward that way.

Great. Thanks so much, Senator. (Applause.)

Senator Tom Udall:

Thank you so much for that very kind introduction. And I just want to thank the CSIS Energy and Climate Change Program, and also the Stephenson Ocean Security Project for the invitation today. And Jill is a regular – my wife, Jill – is a regular attendee and tells me how exciting these conversations are. So I hope I can liven things up a little bit. But I'm going to hit you with a lot of data. So, you know, get ready for – because that's how we're going to make the argument that we need to change our direction in terms of plastic pollution.

And we're really facing a big crisis in terms of plastic pollution. Images of plastic engulfing the planet are everywhere. Beached whales with hundreds of pounds of plastic in their bellies, birds, turtles, fish helplessly trapped in plastic waste, rivers of plastic dumping – being dumped into our oceans. We see plastic waste strewn along our roads, floating in our city storm drains, littering our local parks. Two miles above sea level, in the Rocky Mountains, it's raining microplastics. Seven miles below sea level, at the bottom of the Mariana Trench, the deepest place in the ocean, there are plastic wrappers.

It's in our own bodies. Research shows – and I ask you to just kind of either feel your credit card in your wallet or just think of a credit card. We are swallowing, consuming in our human bodies the equivalent of a credit card worth of plastic every week through the air, water and food. And listen to this number. This is – this is a comparison in history of where we are in terms of plastic. In 1950, the world produced 1.5 million tons of plastic – 1950; today, in 2016, 320 million tons, half of which is single-use plastic, and that number could double in less than 15 years.

Plastic manufacturers have fooled consumers into thinking they can recycle all this plastic waste, a material made from fossil fuels that takes 1,000 years to degrade. So many of us dutifully recycle, but here's the staggering truth: less than eight percent of U.S. plastic waste is actually recycled. There are virtually no facilities in the United States to recycle anything besides plastics labeled 1 and 2. If you read carefully on the items you use, there's a little recycling – and you look in there. Most of them are not 1 and 2, they are others. And so those are being either landfilled, incinerated, or shipped overseas as you see in many of the documentaries on this.

So it's an illusion that's been created that we take this plastic and we put it out on the corner on Thursday or Wednesday, or whatever day, and we've done our part. And it's taken care of and it's recycled. Well over 90 percent of our plastic waste goes into landfills, is incinerated in the air, and shipped to developing countries, or it's just dumped.

So sadly we cannot recycle our way out of this problem. The only way out is to reduce the amount of plastic produced in the first place, and we must put the responsibility for plastic waste where it belongs, on the manufacturers who profit from it instead of on strapped local governments and, ultimately, the taxpayer who foot the bill. And they all do that, picking up the bins, and all the transportation vehicles, and everything else. The conservative estimate: you are spending there \$10 billion a year doing all of that.

Now our Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act, the good news is we can break free from plastic, and I want to tell you about the road map, the path we can take to navigate this crisis and secure our planet for future generations. This month we introduced the first bill in the Congress that comprehensively tackles the plastic crisis, the Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act. Along with Representative Alan Lowenthal of California, we engaged over 200 environmental advocates, industry leaders, local government officials, and others on how to build a sustainable future.

And I'm going to talk about the framework now in about four parts. So this is the more positive of what we need to do. First, we phase out the most harmful plastic items that aren't recyclable, like plastic bags. As you know, 118 communities across the country have banned plastic bags. Plastic utensils – you know, I never figured out what was wrong with a stainless steel fork or spoon, and if you go to REI – I'm a camper – you can get a spoon and a fork that's made of plastic, but it is – you can keep it for the rest of your life. So this whole idea that we're throwing these things away and we've created this economy is a pretty dangerous road to go down. The other things that aren't recyclable that I think really need to be targeted are the foam food and drinkware.

So the second part of our framework to work on this: we require producers to take responsibility for the waste that results after their products are used. Producers must design, manage and finance waste and recycling programs instead of outsourcing their waste to local communities and developing countries that can't handle it. By requiring producers to take responsibility, we will encourage manufacturers to create and design sustainable products. We will put their best engineering minds to work to innovate, create jobs, and grow our economy in sustainable ways. That's real economic opportunity here.

The third approach, and one way to do this is to make sure products get recycled, is through a nationwide bottle deposit system providing 10 cents per container returned. These programs work in states that have them, like Oregon and Michigan. Nearly 90 percent of single-use containers get recycled. So if you have a program and you target it and you have a fee, it makes a difference.

Nationally, this would translate into millions of plastic containers returned and reprocessed into new products. And when we get those

bottles back, we require a greater percentage of recycled content in new bottles. That's what's called the minimum recycled content standard that we try to set there.

The fourth part of this framework, the bill also puts a pause on major plastic production that's going on right now to allow the EPA to update critical protections for public health and the environment. Here's an example. Plastic pellets are the foundation of all plastic products, and without the right EPA rules, plastic producers will continue to dump tiny pellets into waterways and the environment, and this is something that we must, must change.

Now, plastic not only threatens human health; it's associated with cancers, diabetes, organ malfunction, and birth defects, and it's also at the intersection of two existential crises facing our nation and the world: climate change and the nature crisis. Cradle to grave, the life cycle of plastic is greenhouse gas intensive. Extracting fossil fuels to make plastic produces greenhouse gases. The manufacture is intensive and produces emissions. Landfilling or incinerating the waste creates emissions and scientists are finding that even plastic products produce emissions as they degrade.

Today, plastic pollution contributes nearly 5 percent of all global carbon emissions. Oil and gas companies are anticipating decreased demand for fossil fuels. They are hedging their bets and investing in super-polluting petrochemical plastic plants. The plastics in the oil and gas industries have announced \$164 billion in investment for 264 new facilities or expansion products in the United States alone. In as little as five years these investments could increase global plastics production by one-third.

In 10 years, emissions – and this is a shocking one when it comes to climate change – in 10 years, emissions from plastic production could reach the equivalent of more than 295 new 500-megawatt coal-fired power plants.

We lose the climate benefits of coal-fired power plants retiring if we just replace them with mega petrochemical plants. This is – this is a jobs aspect of these plants for sure. But they are not the only hope for new jobs. The packaging industry is 900 billion (dollars) per year and the U.S. recycling industry, over 100 billion (dollars). Innovation in those industries away from wasteful plastic can create many more new jobs than these plants.

And we know where most of those super-polluting plants will find their homes: in poor communities and communities of color. That has been the history. In 30 years, emissions from plastics are forecast to eat up so much of the carbon budget that we won't be able to meet the global target of keeping temperature – the temperature rise – below 1.5 degrees Celsius. We cannot afford to get locked into so much plastic production

that it threatens our planet. We must press pause and forge a more sustainable path forward.

Now, the – let's be clear. This isn't just a problem for nature. It's a problem for humanity. Communities around the world are threatened by this pollution. They rely on our oceans, coral reef systems, healthy fish and wildlife populations and ecosystems for survival. When these are threatened, the livelihoods are jeopardized, and poverty and global insecurity and turmoil result.

So here's the vision part of my talk today, and that's going to be very short. The challenges we face are great. Indeed, they are existential. But we have to have – we have it in our power to change course before it's too late. I have a vision. I hope it will be yours. And I'm promoting it at every opportunity in the hope it will become our shared vision. And it's threefold.

First, we must save nature. Nature is reaching a tipping point. Many ecosystems and animal and plant species are nearing the point of no return, under siege from human forces like plastic pollution. And that's why I've introduced the 30 by 30 to Save Nature resolution to protect 30 percent of our lands and oceans by 2030 and move – and more in the coming decades. This is the science-backed target which we must organize around.

Second, we must tackle climate change with everything we have and transition from fossil fuels to net-zero carbon pollution. And that's why I'm ringing the alarm bell so people see the connection between plastic pollution and climate change.

And third, as we tackle the nature and climate crises, environmental justice must be our north star. Communities of color bear the legacy of toxic pollution. No one should be left behind as we move to a sustainable future. And this future is attainable. The only question is whether we will summon the will and the courage to get it done.

And now I'm very excited to participate in a discussion here with Whit, so I'll move over here with my tea and sit down with him. (Applause.)

Whitley Saumweber:

Wonderful remarks, and I really appreciate you closing with that vision. I think that really was a wonderful articulation of kind of how we move forward and recognizing the realities of today, but also offering up a roadmap for action. So thank you for that.

Just a quick reminder to folks in the audience that if you are interested in asking a question, which we encourage, please go ahead and write on that card, and we'll have folks coming by to collect those throughout. And we'll get those up here in just a few minutes.

But I'll just kick things off a little bit, and maybe picking up on that last theme there about the idea of a combined approach to meeting these environmental challenges before us.

So my program here at the Center is the Stephenson Ocean Security Project. And we firmly believe – in fact, we were sort of created out of this notion that sustainability is a real key component of our needed approach to security and foreign policy. It's really hard to have peace when climate change and overexploitation are creating resource scarcity and increasing competition.

So you alluded to some of the challenges that plastics present in this front. Should we be looking at the plastic issue through the security and foreign-policy lens, in addition to domestic environmental challenges?

Senator Tom Udall:

Whit, I don't have any doubt we should be doing that. And one of the most interesting things, when we worked on the big climate bill in 2009 and 2010, which was called in the House Waxman-Markey, and then it made it over to the Senate – I was on the Environment and Public Works Committee. And when we really looked at the messaging, what was going to bring people around in terms of climate, it ended up being the national-security approach.

And we had a wealth of information. What was amazing – and people to talk about it. You had former CIA directors. You had generals. We know that the Defense Department every day does planning, when they really do their long-term planning, looking at this kind of impact of climate change. And so I think the national security lens is a very important one, absolutely.

Whitley Saumweber:

Certainly. If, as you say, this is going to be 20 percent of our carbon budget by 2050, then climate is perhaps the greatest security challenge we face. You can't deal with one without dealing with the other.

Maybe along those lines, U.S. leadership is critical. We are, as they say, the one truly indispensable nation. And developing a really robust and aggressive policy on plastics is important here at home. But yet, we are not the major producer of plastic waste around the globe. That's really focused in five countries and a few others in Southeast Asia as being among the biggest polluters. How does U.S. leadership here on this issue help to address and support growth in circular economies elsewhere?

Senator Tom Udall:

Well, one of the points that I would make about the five countries – and when you look at their impact, a lot of times it's pointed out that the plastics are coming from the rivers over in Southeast Asia. A lot of that, if you – and you can follow this in the documentaries that are out there on plastics – is shipped from the United States. Many times in the past, up until a couple of years ago, it was shipped to China. Now what happens is it's shipped into these countries in Southeast Asia. They get a little bit

of value, because what you see in these documentaries is people wandering through mounds and mounds of plastic that's come to them from around the world, trying to pick out the things that have a little bit of value, and then the rest of it usually makes it – either it's they have plants that incinerate it near people's homes, gets dumped, or it's pushed into the waters, and then on into the ocean. So it's a – it's a really, really serious problem in terms of that.

Whitley Saumweber: Great. Last question, then maybe we'll get to some audience questions. So one of the, I think, most interesting and aggressive portions of your bill is this idea of shifting the burden onto producers. I think you called it and I had it written down here, the –

Senator Tom Udall: Extender producer responsibility.

Whitley Saumweber: Responsibility. Thank you.

Senator Tom Udall: The simple word in the past has been polluter pays, but that's the model. That's the model.

Whitley Saumweber: So talk about that model. So where's that come from and why are you interested in driving that model, as opposed to our current approach?

Senator Tom Udall: Well, a lot of the big problems we've gotten into have happened as a result of industry convincing the public that it's their responsibility. And now I'm talking about targeting plastics right now, is that we've gotten into this whole idea of recycling. But in fact, what's happened is, we aren't really recycling. As the numbers in my speech pointed out, some of the ones in the documentaries that I've seen, only 8 percent of what is discarded is actually being recycled. And you compare that with other industries, like aluminum, like paper. I mean, I've gone into grocery stores now and you get a paper bag – hopefully you're taking your own bags – but you get a paper bag and it says, 100 percent – 100 percent – recycled content.

And what we've done in terms of plastics is we – it's the biggest part of the throwaway society. We put it out on the corner. It's collected. As Jonathan Black, my assistant that's working on this that's sitting over here, tell me, that only in the United States, if you look at all those – you have the one and two with plants. All the rest of it is either landfilled, incinerated, or sent overseas. And so we're really becoming a complete throw-away society in terms of plastics. And that's why you have to come back to the folks that are producing it. They understand it. They know how to remake the industry. They know how to keep the jobs in the industry. And they know how to do a better job. And it's our job, as leaders, to keep the pressure on them.

Whitley Saumweber: Thank you for that.



So I'm going to turn now to some of the audience questions here. It looks like we've got a bunch of great ones. I'll start off with a little bit of a more challenging one. Given the situation in Congress, with very challenging partisan times, gridlock, what are your thoughts on trying to move this bill? And how can you use this bill, even in this sort of stifled environment, to advance this idea?

Senator Tom Udall:

Yeah. Yeah. Well, you know, the wonderful thing in Washington is whenever you get a big idea the first question you're asked is, you can never get it done. (Laughter.) So it kind of sends you the message. You get the message, as a member of Congress, don't ever have any big ideas, you know? Get small, little ideas, so that you can – you know, that then you can brag about you got a bill through on a small, little idea.

You know the thing that I'm realizing, is that people are excited about big ideas. People get really excited about big ideas. We have seen the energy behind this. And believe me, the other party – the Republican Party; I'm a Democrat – they have in their plank something about plastic pollution. The GOP over in the House side. So they know it's there. They'll talk about it a little bit. But they won't do what needs to be done.

And so my approach on this, is when you tackle a problem – recently Jonathan and I tackled the issue, and my whole staff, my communications staff and others, we said – there was an issue of toxic chemicals getting into our bodies. And this is related to the plastics, obviously. And we took the big idea, it took us three years, we got it done, and we got it done in a bipartisan way. And what ended up happening is I only had one Republican – one Republican – that started out with me, a guy by the name of David Vitter from Louisiana. And he just – we stuck together. We had a dinner. And we just pushed that thing through.

And so that's really the model. If you can find – one, if you can get a bipartisan bill and two of you are willing to work and put the pressure on everybody, and call people in. The one other thing I want to say about the issue of the big ideas is not only do you throw the idea out there, but you reach out to industry, to stakeholders, to environmental groups, to anybody that's interested and say – and what we did on this bill, this plastics bill, we put our draft on the table. And we said: Here, you have time – we give them a period of time – to comment.

And then we take their comments and we look at what the experts say. I have a scientist on my staff, Kate right over here, who's come from one of these great national science programs that places fellows. And we take their comments, and we go and we research. Is this a good idea or is this an idea that's based in evidence and science? And then we hone down bill, and then we put it out. So the thing I would tell you is that a lot of work has already been put into this bill. Doesn't mean we don't need a lot more interaction and a lot more working with everybody to get it done.

But I think this is the direction, this is where the excitement is, and this is what people want done.

Whitley Saumweber: Excellent. Having been through –

Senator Tom Udall: You have a whole batch of them there.

Whitley Saumweber: – a number of those stakeholder processes, I can understand how intensive they can be, but also how much important – how important that kind of feedback is both in terms of getting ideas but also in terms of developing consensus. And the idea that people are – feel like they've been heard I think really matters.

There's kind of a couple related questions here, have to do with how we transition away from the current use of plastics in so many industries and encourage new technologies and development of new technologies. Are you trying to address that through this bill as well?

Senator Tom Udall: Oh, yeah. Absolutely. Well, I think – I think I mentioned that, is that our model is to – is to – rather than have the taxpayers, and low-income communities, and all the people that are impacted by this – and that's where the dumping takes place, that's where the incinerators are put – we have the industry itself – the push of this bill is to say: come up with a new model, because your model's not working right now. And so that's really where we're coming from. And you see it happening.

The one example I used that I think is very appropriate here, in a state like Michigan where you say on bottles that you buy they're going to be a ten-cent deposit and you have it returned, you then end up in that state getting – the next step in the process is when you buy another bottle that you have a very high content. We call it minimum or recyclable content in that product. And so you're requiring the reuse, which is really, in a way – I talked about nature. That's what nature does all the time. You know, we're – the ecosystems that are out there, those are our life-support system. We get everything. We may think that we're just in buildings like this and we do it all. But our life-support system is what's out in the world.

And nature, if you watch, you watch a forest, a healthy forest, the leaves turn into fertilizer and the whole nature system in terms of carbon and everything else is one recyclable system. So that's something that I think we would be better off following, many of the companies following that recycling process, true recycling, rather than getting into the approach where everything's throwaway and we don't have to worry about it.

Whitley Saumweber: How does this bill and maybe broader U.S. approach to these issues reflect or differ from other major developed states? Take the EU, for example.

Senator Tom Udall: Yeah. Well, the EU and Canada are already out in front of us. So when you talk about minimum recycled content in a product, that's one of the standards we put in this bill. That's what they're doing in the major countries around the world and what they're doing up in Canada. They're pushing the envelope.

And when you travel – I'm sure many of you are travelers around the world – you see that. Other countries are trying to take approaches where they have a lower carbon footprint. This is a little bit off – I've never quite figured it out – a little bit off my plastic message here. Jonathan, you'll forgive me. But I've never figured out – you go into a European country and you start to leave the room. And, you know, they have the credit card at the door, and you pull it out or you hit a switch, and all the lights shut off. And we don't use very much of that technology over here.

I always find myself running a little bit late because I'm going around the room and turning off all the lights that I turned on. And it's very – and I've asked – I've said to contractors over here, said why don't we put in a switch right at the door that says turn all the lights out? And they say, well, we know that's out there, but it's a lot harder to put in. But, in fact, it saves a lot more energy. And that's why our amount of energy we use compared to other countries around the world, why we're at a much higher level.

So there are really smart ways of doing this. This isn't something that's not being done around the world. We're actually following other countries in many cases in some of the things we're proposing in this bill.

Whitley Saumweber: One of the things that – some of the other issues that we work on here in the Ocean Security Project is the issue of the trade in illegal seafood. And that's a situation where the U.S. and the EU have tremendous market interest and power because we import a lot of product, seafood products, from around the country. And so how we deploy our regulatory controls for importing those goods really affects the global market.

Do you see a similar approach possible in the realm of plastics? So, for example, if we are to develop a robust domestic-policy-production regime, is that something that you might look to as a next step, trade and import controls?

Senator Tom Udall: Yeah. I think that that could be something that works very well. I do.

Whitley Saumweber: Let's see here.

Senator Tom Udall: You just got a lot more.

Whitley Saumweber: Let's get a few more over here, yeah. Here we go. (Laughter.) We've covered quite a bit already, so –

Senator Tom Udall: I'm sure you're hitting duplicates there, so you're trying to –

Whitley Saumweber: That's right. So what about foreign assistance as a component of the legislation? Is that something you've thought about? So, for example, helping developing economies in Asia. You mentioned the problem of our exporting of waste really being the source of so much of that pollution. But is that something that you've thought about? I know, for example, there's some other legislation on the Hill. Save Our Seas 2.0 kind of gets into that some.

Senator Tom Udall: Yeah.

Whitley Saumweber: And maybe you could – this is a good opportunity to talk about the relationship between your bill and that bill.

Senator Tom Udall: Yeah. The foreign-assistance part of it, I think – and I'm going to speak more broadly about this, because I think this is something that, when we confront climate change, when we confront the nature crisis, we really need to be thinking how can we, as one of the leaders in the world, be trying to do everything we can to help these other countries.

And one of the ways – I remember I was on trip over in India, and there was a fairly big audience, and they wanted to hear about the idea of how we were doing what we were doing on climate. And they were stuck in mini systems; you know, small stoves in villages and that kind of thing. And when I talked about our assisting them – the United States – from leapfrogging over some of the dirtier technologies, that was the thing that resonated the most.

And so I – it's not in this bill right now, but I think we need to be thinking in these big-picture areas where we're way ahead of a lot of people in the world – Europe may be way ahead, Canada may be way ahead – but the billions of other people are way behind, and so how do we make sure that they skip some of the dirtier technologies and get to the others? And I think foreign assistance is going to be part of that and actually trying to provide some of those technologies, which ends up growing the jobs over here.

I mean, the thing to never forget – these cutting-edge technologies that are there, it's the countries that produce those that are going to do the best in terms of the jobs. And so that's where we want to position America, I think.

Whitley Saumweber: All right. Returning to domestic policy now, this is a pretty comprehensive bill. It touches on a wide-ranging number of industries. Who has the lead from the federal perspective – federal government perspective in managing your proposed programs? Is that going to be EPA?

Senator Tom Udall: EPA. EPA, yeah.

Whitley Saumweber: Got you, yeah.

Senator Tom Udall: And what EPA is – when I mentioned in the bill, on the plants, we have these new plastic plants, mega-petrochemical plants that are coming online, the equivalent of –the news ones and the investments, 500 new coal-fired plants, or the equivalent of 500 megawatt. Huge – you know, huge, big, coal-fired plants – we’re putting more up when, on the other side, we have been very successful in terms of our natural gas, as a transition fuel, closing down coal-fired plants.

So I think the important thing is to get out front with an agency that has the expertise like the Environmental Protection Agency. They can look into this, they can supervise it, and they can push in the pause to see that the normal regulations that you would put in place – many of these incinerators, if you look at the two or three documentaries that are out there on this, are sitting right next to communities, and you are hearing all sorts of health problems from the people from the time the plant opened up. Well, many of those plants are functioning under old standards. The science, we know, is much better to push the envelope in terms of cleaning them up. And we need to give the – we’re only pausing to give the EPA an opportunity to say, you know, you’ve got to improve the health and safety standards in your plan.

Whitley Saumweber: Right. Through your stakeholder process, I see we’ve gotten a tremendous amount of support from various public conversations, but how has the reaction from industry been? Have you gotten support from certain corners of the industry?

Senator Tom Udall: Well, the encouraging thing – and when we talk about minimum recycle content, that idea came when we talked to some of the bigger people in the industry – Pepsi Cola, Coca-Cola, people like that. They were familiar with that because that’s what other people are doing around the world. And they said, you know, we want to talk about that; we’re not signing on necessarily, but we understand. We’ve moved in that direction in European countries and Canada, and we’re amenable to the process.

I think it’s a big step to say that you are going to have industry step forward whole hog and say, you know, this is a great bill. What we see around the United States is if a community, a city, or a state pops its head up and wants to do one of these bottle bills where you have a deposit and you have a return, and that kind of thing, it’s usually industry and industry money that fights it.

But I think as you build – what we learned in the toxic chemicals bills and in TSCA, as you build more and more public support and the public becomes more educated, they sweep that aside and the industry has to get

down to seriously negotiating and coming up with a bill that's going to work and move us in the new direction.

Whitley Saumweber: And as you increase the recyclable content of those plastics that becomes a useful resource for those companies as well. I've actually heard it said that, in fact, the industry wants its bottles back if they can get them.

Senator Tom Udall: Yeah. Yeah. Especially in the United States if they're one and twos. You know, one – look at how many of what your – on those little recycle things there's a one and a two. Those are the only ones we recycle here in the United States. So that's either headed overseas, it's incinerated, or it's dumped in a landfill. And so we need to be at the place where you can reuse and truly recycle.

Whitley Saumweber: Great. Well, I think that's a good place to end on but I do have one final question, and this comes from the audience. (Laughter.) Red or green chilies?

Senator Tom Udall: I'm a Christmas guy. That's where you put them both together. (Laughter.)

Whitley Saumweber: All right. Great. Well, thank you so much, Senator. We really appreciate it.

Senator Tom Udall: Thank you, Whit. Thank you. Thank you. (Applause.)

(END)