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August 8, 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

Ocean Conservancy writes to express our support for the proposal submitted by Dr. Chelsea Rochman, Dr. Karen Shapiro, Dr. Elizabeth VanWormer, and Dr. Minji Kim to investigate how microplastics may be a surface to support the growth of harmful pathogens and whether that makes them an important vector of harmful pathogens in shellfish.

For over 45 years, Ocean Conservancy has taken a science-based approach to develop solutions to tackle the biggest threats to our ocean. Ocean Conservancy partners with government, industry, academia and other non-government organizations to develop robust solutions based on scientific research. As it relates to marine debris, and ocean plastics specifically, Ocean Conservancy's Trash Free Seas® Program recognizes the need for additional research to help inform and guide solution development.

Previous research on quantity, marine life exposure, and estimating the economic costs of marine debris have helped to contextualize the challenges that we face. However, a number of research gaps remain, including questions around how marine debris impacts coastal ecosystem health and seafood safety. The proposed research would help advance this understanding as the current knowledge on the sub-lethal, but potentially significant health consequences of microplastics ingestion in marine wildlife and humans is limited.

As the marine debris threat grows, so too does the impact on our economy and our environment. Supporting rigorous and meaningful research is a vital part of the process to develop solutions to tackle this problem. Ocean Conservancy strongly believes in the advancement of this research and supports the work outlined here. Furthermore, Ocean Conservancy welcomes the opportunity to work with the researchers to facilitate outreach and education with our network of 130,000 members and 875,000 online ocean activists.

Sincerely,



Nicholas J. Mallos
Director, Trash Free Seas® Program
Ocean Conservancy



Dr. Karen Shapiro
VM: Pathology, Microbiology, & Immunology
4206 VM3A
University of California
One Shields Ave.
Davis, CA 95616

Dear Dr. Shapiro:

August 8, 2018

I am writing on behalf of the Surfrider Foundation to express our support for your CA Ocean Protection Council Proposition 84 proposal: **Interaction between microplastics and pathogen pollutants in marine ecosystems: Implications for seafood safety**. As the Plastic Pollution Manager for the Surfrider Foundation, I am especially interested in your efforts to test the ability of microplastic pollutants to vector pathogens in marine ecosystems. Despite the ubiquitous and serious nature of plastic debris in the global oceans, there is a lack of data on the impacts that microplastics have on marine ecosystem health, especially at the microscopic level.

The interaction between microplastics and harmful microorganisms may be an important but vastly understudied phenomenon. As an organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our ocean, waves and beaches, having the latest scientific knowledge on how plastic in the ocean is impacting marine ecosystems is critical. The aims set forth in the current proposal would provide crucial new insight on whether microplastics can mediate transmission of zoonotic pathogens that contaminate the nearshore through overland runoff. The results would therefore be relevant in understanding the link between microplastic contamination in the ocean and its impact on marine life as well as human health.

On behalf of the Surfrider Foundation, I am extending support for your research team and am looking forward to receiving updates regarding the progress of your investigations if selected for funding.

Sincerely,

Trent E. Hodges

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Trent Hodges". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Plastic Pollution Manager | Surfrider Foundation