Thank you Chair and Members of the Committee.

The Endocrine Society appreciates the opportunity to provide a statement at this meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee during a critical time in the negotiations towards this important treaty. We are here at INC4 representing the world’s largest and oldest professional society dedicated to the understanding of hormone systems and clinical care of those with endocrine diseases. Our members’ expertise has advanced our understanding of how chemicals in plastics can interfere with the function of endocrine systems and act as endocrine-disrupting chemicals or EDCs and cause human and ecological health impacts.

From the beginning of this process, we have engaged with the INC to share our insights with Members about the well-established scientific evidence linking chemicals in plastic to diseases such as obesity, diabetes, infertility, and cancer. Furthermore, we have highlighted the extraordinary economic costs of exposure to these chemicals, on the order of $250 billion per year in the US alone. These are major public health issues worldwide, and a strong legally binding instrument that addresses chemicals of concern in plastic is an important step towards implementing measures to prevent further suffering caused by EDCs. Towards that end, we urge Member State Delegates to act with urgency during this meeting and in the intersessional period to make progress towards a treaty that:

1. Emphasizes the importance of human and environmental health in the objective of the instrument.
2. Recognizes the need for actions to limit plastic production.
3. Incorporates measures to minimize exposure to chemicals of concern, including EDCs; recognizing that “of concern” may refer to a chemical’s hazardous properties.
4. Measures public health impact by supporting biomonitoring studies, especially in regions that lack the capacity to undertake large projects to estimate the body burden of plastic chemicals.
5. Includes scientists with relevant expertise, free from conflicts of interest, in the monitoring and evaluation of the treaty.

We appreciate that this is an important and complex undertaking; however, we are concerned that exposure to hazardous EDCs in plastic will only grow and cause further harm if this process is delayed and production continues to increase at current rates. EDCs operate at extremely low levels that are biologically relevant to hormone signaling and development, and the harms may manifest years later. Children, women, and other populations with disproportionate exposures, are more at risk with every moment we waste. We recognize the need to make progress at this meeting and also, through intersessional work between INC4 and INC5. Our members stand ready to help and provide scientific expertise at this meeting, throughout the intersessional process, and in the implementation of the treaty.