You are an Industry Advocate from the Plastics Manufacturing Sector

Your Background and Biography

You are an executive for a large chemical company that specializes in polymers. Your career path has been the realization of all your childhood dreams. You enjoyed sports, acting, and debating, but mostly you liked science. You were considered a nerd by your classmates, but you had higher aims in life than trying to cultivate their approval. You were inspired to love science by Ms. Wallace, your demanding but enthusiastic high-school chemistry teacher. You went to college and received a bachelor’s degree in chemistry and physics. Upon graduation from college you continued your graduate studies, ultimately receiving a master’s degree and a Ph.D. in organic chemistry.

You began your career working for a large chemical manufacturing company, where you further developed your expertise in polymer chemistry. You hold several patents and have many publications in peer-reviewed journals on your work developing new applications for polymers and plastics. Your excellent communication skills eventually led you outside the lab. You have worked in marketing and sales and as a spokesperson for your industry. You joined many professional organizations where you became recognized as a leader. You have been active in your community and participated in local politics. You also know that the future of chemistry will ultimately rest with the next generation. Therefore, in addition to your full-time job you teach university chemistry courses.

You are well aware of the issues that contribute to plastic’s negative reputation in the public mind. You have spent your entire career developing new applications and products. As a leader in your field you have made many presentations citing the positive aspects of plastics, and you are willing to address in an honest, forthright manner the aspects of plastics that many consider negative. You have served on many advisory boards and have received several prestigious awards for your work. You are not a stranger to Washington, D.C., and have been frequently called on to testify on behalf of your industry.

This time is no different. You are an expert not only in the research, development, and production of plastic polymers but also in the end-of-life concerns surrounding their disposal. You have considerable knowledge of recycling practices both in the United States and abroad. You have traveled extensively in many countries where you have had the opportunity to see firsthand how other governments approach plastic-waste disposal. This public hearing is exactly where you want and need to be. You can make all the arguments why government regulation of plastic will not be effective and how the plastics industry can and will educate the public and self-regulate the concerns about plastics.
Your Mission

Your goal at this hearing is to convince the Regulators to include the Industry Group’s recommendations in their final regulation. To make this argument effectively, you must

- Complete the assigned readings listed at the bottom of this page:
- Work closely with the other members of your group to develop clear answers to the Regulators’ questions;
- Make use of as much specific information as possible to develop strong arguments that the many societal benefits of plastics outweigh the problems and that the industry can and does regulate itself without government intervention;
- Read as much as you can about your position and the positions of the other groups; and
- Complete written reflections on your character, interest group, and readings as assigned.

Your Victory Objectives

- **You will receive 10 points** if the Regulators select your group’s proposal as the final regulation.
- The Regulators will rank the interest groups by how well their goals are represented in the final regulation. **You will receive between 1 and 5 points** based on how the Industry Group is ranked and how well the regulation reflects your goals.

Sources

Industry Group Sources

- Case Study: Plastics: An American Success Story
- “Interview with Steve Russell,” video, vimeo.com/channels/465871

Your Individual Sources

- “EU REACH and U.S. Regulation of Chemicals and Chemical Users,” by the National Electrical Manufacturers Association
- Select one article from the bibliography on The Case of Plastics website recommended for the Industry Group. Read the article and write two paragraphs summarizing the article and how it will be useful to you in the upcoming debate.