Madam President, Members of Council

The Committee on Environmental Improvement (CEI) would like to join those welcoming you here to San Diego. Our committee has been focused on this national meeting for the last three years as the organizers of the meeting theme, Chemistry and Water. This morning, we would like to highlight some of the elements of the theme programming and how they advanced our goals and the ACS goals for participants.

We hope many of you were able to attend the opening session on Sunday, which featured chemists and related professionals discussing the impact of chemistry on water and it’s uses. The session made real for ACS members the connections between our community and the greater world, and the essence of Chemistry for Life. We hope everyone walked away with a new appreciation of their work and role as chemists and chemical engineers in the world around us. We also hope you had the opportunity to attend the environmental film festival yesterday. The festival featured collaborative short films with chemists and film makers. This session provided a new avenue to help us communicate the value of chemistry. CEI would like to thank our partners, particularly from the 18 technical divisions, which produced over 79 symposia directly related to the theme.

As part of our committee discussions on Saturday and Sunday, we explored new opportunities in sustainability and the chemistry enterprise. One of those opportunities is the UN Sustainable development goals. CEI has spent time prior to this meeting presenting programming around this topic. These 17 goals provide an opportunity to organize a wide range of activities relevant to the chemistry community and the wider world. We are just at the beginning of these conversations and would strongly welcome the participation from all of you to shape work around these goals in support of the ACS mission. We encourage other ACS units to work with us on this effort and you can reach out to me at CEI@ACS.ORG.

One particular environmental challenge that CEI is wrestling with today is single-use plastics and their impact on the environment. The scale of this problem provides us with an opportunity to think differently about chemical pathways, how we teach chemistry, and how we develop new products. CEI is now thinking through what types of work, whether programming or otherwise, can productively contribute to this conversation, and we call on other units to work with us on defining the role of ACS in addressing this challenge. Again, interested units should reach out to us at CEI@ACS.ORG . This is not a topic that CEI can address alone, and the Society should collectively play a leadership role to meet this challenge.

CEI is excited to engage on these and many other topics in the future. Madam President, this concludes my report.