



125 Rowell Court
Falls Church, VA 22046

RECYCLINGPARTNERSHIP.ORG

June 29, 2022

The Honorable Paul Tonko
Chairman, Committee on Energy & Commerce
Subcommittee on Environment & Climate Change
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David McKinley
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy & Commerce
Subcommittee on Environment & Climate Change
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Subcommittee Chairman Tonko and Ranking Member McKinley:

Thank you for all of your efforts to advance the American recycling system and support American communities and businesses at this time. On behalf of The Recycling Partnership, I request to have our attached statement be included in the record for the hearing entitled "No Time to Waste: Solutions for America's Broken Recycling System."

The Recycling Partnership is a national nonprofit that works with companies, communities, and policymakers across the nation to strengthen America's recycling programs. Our organization puts private dollars to work in communities because we know that when we invest in a system that creates jobs, supports manufacturing, protects resources, empowers sustainable action, and unlocks opportunity, everyone wins.

We applaud the Committee for having a hearing dedicated to the current state of our nation's recycling system. We thank you for your consideration of our request and look forward to working with the Committee to help strengthen recycling programs across this country.

Sincerely,

Keefe Harrison
CEO
The Recycling Partnership

Hearing on “No Time to Waste: Solutions for America’s Broken Recycling System”

Statement for the Record

House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change

June 30, 2022

Keefe Harrison
CEO
The Recycling Partnership

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a statement into the hearing record for the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change Hearing on “No Time to Waste: Solutions for America’s Broken Recycling System.”

Producer responsibility is not a new or unproven concept.

More than 30 years ago, recycling advocates across the country began to raise awareness and support for a policy concept that would reimagine and revitalize the recycling system for the United States, shifting from the current reality where communities and their taxpayers pay the full costs of recycling to a future where producers of packaging and printed paper are involved in the financing and consideration of end-of-life management for their products. While it comes in different shapes and sizes, this policy concept is known broadly as producer responsibility. There are [more than 80 state producer responsibility laws](#) in the United States alone for materials ranging from packaging and printed paper to mercury thermostats.

A shared producer responsibility is supported by companies and communities alike.

The support for a shared producer responsibility stems from both residential and industry demand to see a higher quantity and quality of valuable resources kept in productive use by our nation’s recycling system. The [American people are committed to recycling](#); while times change and market prices come and go, the fact remains that Americans don’t want to bury billions of dollars of resources in the ground when they could be put back to good use in a circular economy – creating hundreds of thousands of new jobs, strengthening America’s supply chain for domestic manufacturing feedstock, and protecting our planet’s air, water, and natural resources by minimizing waste and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. With [communities struggling to afford to support their recycling programs](#), producer responsibility offers an opportunity for sustainable program funding that will enable more resilient and robust recycling services to be provided.

Furthermore, American producers have [committed to seeing their products recycled and made from sustainable, domestically sourced recycled content](#). Recycling is not just a municipal service but also a supply chain for critical manufacturing feedstock. With a stagnant U.S. recycling rate, it is clear that the current structure of our nation’s recycling system is not going to provide the valuable supply of recyclables that American companies demand. And who but our nation’s producers have the resources and the drive to get our nation’s recycling system up and running at 100%? Producer responsibility equips American companies with an efficient and effective way to invest in a national recycling system of the future that will capture the resources and deliver the results American industry and constituents expect.

It is time to move forward with a uniquely American model.

The cost of burying or incinerating millions of dollars of valuable materials across the country every single year is enormous. While reducing, reusing, and recycling is not free, the economic and environmental benefits are widespread and vast. With more than [200,000 new jobs and \\$30 billion in economic impact at stake](#), how can our nation afford to not recycle all that we can?

After decades of conversation and consideration, countless U.S. stakeholders ranging from small municipalities to large multinational corporations have arrived at the same conclusion: producer responsibility is a critical component to the success of our nation's recycling system. While the design and details of producer responsibility programs may vary, stakeholders from key sectors and every stage of our nation's recycling system recognize the need for smart, well-designed producer responsibility legislation that will move our nation forward in the right direction. There are billions of dollars in investment in recycling end markets for multiple materials being considered in the United States, but without producer responsibility to increase the capture of recyclables, these investments will likely not move forward, stifling economic development.

The time is now for federal policymakers to lead a bipartisan conversation around producer responsibility that represents the shared interest and support that underlies such a policy. Increased investment in our nation's recycling system is a win for all Americans, representing a cause that members of Congress from all parties and places can get behind. The Recycling Partnership looks forward to supporting a collaborative and constructive path forward for federal producer responsibility legislation that will build a stronger and more resilient national recycling system for all. We cannot afford to continue to rely fully on virgin packaging materials, which continue to increase in cost while we continue to dispose of recyclables and our future.