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6 MARKUP OF:

7 H.R. 8739, BROWNFIELDS REVITALIZATION FOR A BETTER TOMORROW
8 ACT;

9 H.R. 2145, RECYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACCESSIBILITY ACT;
10 AND

11 H.R. 4109, RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

12 THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2026

13 House of Representatives,

14 Subcommittee on Environment,

15 Committee on Energy and Commerce,

16 Washington, D.C.

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20 The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:15 a.m.,
21 Room 2123, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Gary Palmer
22 [Chairman of the Subcommittee], presiding.

23 Present: Representatives Palmer, Latta, Griffith,
24 Carter of Georgia, Joyce, Weber, Pfluger, Miller-Meeks,
25 Evans, Fedorchak, Guthrie (ex-officio); Tonko, Schakowsky,
26 Ruiz, Peters, Barragan, Soto, Auchincloss, Carter of
27 Louisiana, Menendez, Landsman, and Pallone (ex-officio).

28

29 Staff Present: Ansley Boylan, Director of Operations;
30 Byron Brown, Chief Counsel; Jessica Donlon, General Counsel;
31 Sydney Greene, Director of Finance and Logistics; Christen
32 Harsha, Senior Counsel; Megan Jackson, Staff Director; Noah
33 Jackson, Clerk; AT Johnson, Special Advisor; Brayden
34 Lacefield, Special Assistant; William Layton, Policy Analyst;
35 Joel Miller, Deputy Staff Director; Ben Mullaney, Press
36 Secretary; Claire Richey, Clerk; Seth Ricketts, Clerk;
37 Jackson Rudden, Clerk; Chris Sarley, Member Services/
38 Stakeholder Director; Timothy Trimble, Staff Assistant; Matt
39 VanHyfte, Communications Director; Katie West, Press
40 Secretary; Katharine Willey, Senior Counsel; Keegan Cardman,
41 Minority Staff Assistant; Giancarlo Ceja, Minority Staff
42 Assistant; Tiffany Guarascio, Minority Staff Director;
43 Anthony Gutierrez, Minority Professional Staff Member;
44 Caitlin Haberman, Minority Staff Director; Serena Klebba
45 Minority Intern; Brendan Lopez, Minority Press Assistant;
46 Kylea Rogers, Minority Policy Analyst; and Andrew Souvall,
47 Minority Director, Communications, Outreach, Member Services.
48

49 *Mr. Palmer. The committee will come to order. The
50 chair recognizes himself for an opening statement.

51 Welcome to today's markup before the House Energy and
52 Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Environment. Today we
53 will consider three pieces of legislation.

54 Starting with the Brownfields Revitalization for a
55 Better Tomorrow Act, this legislation reauthorizes the
56 Environmental Protection Agency's brownfields grants program
57 and the state response program. The policy updates in the
58 bill incorporate input from two subcommittee hearings which
59 included testimony from local government officials, state
60 environmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and the
61 private sector. The subcommittee considered opportunities
62 such as the value of reusing existing difficulties -- reusing
63 existing infrastructure at brownfield sites, as well as
64 challenges such as the difficulties rural communities face in
65 putting together competitive grant applications.

66 The policy improvements in the Brownfields
67 Revitalization Act for a Better Tomorrow reflect bipartisan
68 negotiations and feedback from the Environmental Protection
69 Agency. This reauthorization bill includes enhancements to
70 existing tools such as increased grant award amounts, a
71 waiver of cost share requirements for small or disadvantaged
72 communities, and additional oversight of the revolving loan
73 funds.

74 It also incorporates some new ideas to facilitate the
75 timely remediation of these sites and, ultimately, their
76 return to productive reuse. For example, this legislation
77 would support use of brownfields grant funding to help local
78 communities clean up and redevelop former military
79 installations and locate the building of critical
80 infrastructure at brownfield sites. It also builds on
81 existing requirements for states receiving funding under the
82 state response programs, directing states to publish an
83 inventory of sites on which this funding was utilized.

84 Our bill also requires EPA to issue guidance to assist
85 Federal agencies to more efficiently utilize site-specific
86 information and previous environmental reviews in considering
87 redevelopment on brownfield sites. This legislation
88 reauthorizes these programs consistent with the most
89 recently-enacted appropriations legislation.

90 While my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would
91 like to see higher authorization levels, we cannot ignore
92 historical regular appropriations levels. We plan to
93 continue discussions with our minority and Senate colleagues
94 on authorization funding levels. I hope we can work together
95 to get this bill across the finish line, rather than allowing
96 the authorization for this important program to continue to
97 lapse.

98 We will also consider H.R. 2145, the Recycling

99 Infrastructure and Accessibility Act, introduced by
100 Representative Miller-Meeks of Iowa. This bipartisan
101 legislation directs the EPA to establish a pilot program to
102 award grants to states, tribes, local governments, and
103 public-private partnerships for projects to increase access
104 to recycling systems, particularly in underserved
105 communities.

106 Increasing recycling rates provides us with an
107 opportunity to recover and reuse more discarded material. In
108 turn, we can keep more of these products in our domestic
109 supply chains, enhancing our economic and national security.
110 This legislation will also reduce the cost of implementing
111 recycling programs in underserved communities.

112 Finally, we will also consider H.R. 4109, the Recycling
113 and Composting Accountability Act. This legislation, which
114 also enjoys bipartisan support, tasks the EPA with collecting
115 data and information to assess -- to assess national
116 recycling and composting rates. We plan to take up this
117 legislation as an amendment to the Recycling Infrastructure
118 and Accessibility Act.

119 With this markup we hope to further our goal of
120 maximizing the value of our Federal dollars and channeling
121 them towards programs that improve the quality of life in
122 communities across our country. I look forward to hopefully
123 advancing these bills and to our continued discussion today.

124 I now recognize the gentleman from New York's 20th
125 district, the ranking member of the subcommittee,
126 Representative Tonko, for five minutes for an opening
127 statement.

128 *Mr. Tonko. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

129 Today the Environment Subcommittee will consider three
130 bills to address pressing environmental and economic
131 challenges facing our nation.

132 H.R. 2145, the Recycling Infrastructure and
133 Accessibility Act led by Congresswoman Miller-Meeks and H.R.
134 4109, the Recycling and Composting Accountability Act, led by
135 Congressman Neguse are bipartisan bills to improve recycling
136 systems in our United States. The RIAA would establish a
137 pilot program at the EPA to award grants to improve recycling
138 accessibility in underserved and rural communities. And the
139 RCAA would improve data collection on our nation's recycling
140 systems and explore the potential of a national composting
141 strategy. The legislation would require EPA to collect and
142 publish data on recycling and composting rates to provide an
143 accurate reflection of performance both nationwide and at the
144 state level. Both bills are supported by a diverse coalition
145 of stakeholders and have been passed by the Senate several
146 times over the past three congresses.

147 While these bills will not fix all of the issues with
148 our nation's recycling and waste systems, I believe they are

149 an important first step to addressing some of the most
150 obvious shortcomings. I do look forward to these bills
151 finally getting over the finish line and enacted this year.

152 Unfortunately, I have concerns with the third bill
153 before us today. H.R. 8739, the Brownfields Revitalization
154 for a Better Tomorrow Act. EPA's brownfields program has a
155 long history of bipartisan support. It does provide critical
156 resources to state and local governments to support the
157 remediation of blighted properties, which increases property
158 values and local tax revenue, preserves greenfields and
159 creates jobs.

160 And there are aspects of the bill before us today that
161 would improve the program and align with priorities
162 identified during our legislative hearing back in March.
163 This includes increasing the maximum award limit to \$1
164 million and waiving cost share requirements for awards to
165 disadvantaged and small communities. These reforms will
166 allow more communities to be able to access the program and
167 enable them to tackle more complex and costly sites.

168 I sincerely appreciate that the majority has worked with
169 us on these and other aspects of the bill. But
170 unfortunately, the bill also includes significant funding
171 cuts to the programs authorization levels, which I cannot
172 support. H.R. 8739 would reduce the authorization level of
173 EPA's grant program from \$200 million to \$123.5 million

174 annually. Similarly, it would reduce the state response
175 program authorization from \$50 million to \$46.25 million
176 annually. Not only are these funding levels lower than the
177 bipartisan agreement that has already been advanced by our
178 counterparts in the Senate, but they are also below what the
179 majority had proposed in their discussion draft from our
180 March legislative hearing. It is hard to understand why such
181 a cut would be warranted.

182 Everyone agrees this program is effective, and every
183 hearing witness testified that the program should have more
184 funding, not less, especially as state and local governments
185 prepare to tackle more complex sites with higher award
186 amounts. This program has always been bipartisan, and I hope
187 we can work together before full committee to restore this
188 funding.

189 With that I thank you, Mr. Chair, and I yield back.

190 *Mr. Palmer. I now recognize the gentleman from
191 Kentucky's 2nd district, the chairman of the full committee,
192 Representative Guthrie, for five minutes for an opening
193 statement.

194 *The Chair. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

195 First of all, I think some numbers of years ago in
196 Hackleburg, Alabama you were born this day, right? So happy
197 birthday. Were you born in Hackleburg?

198 *Mr. Palmer. I was born in Haleyville.

199 *The Chair. Haleyville. Oh, Robert -- Winston County.
200 Robert Aderholt's sister. Well, happy birthday to you, Mr.
201 Chairman.

202 *Mr. Palmer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

203 [Applause.]

204 *The Chair. Most people don't know where Hackleburg is,
205 but you and I may be the only two. So thank you, Chairman,
206 Chairman Palmer, for this markup today, and members of the
207 subcommittee for all the hard work and all the bipartisan
208 hard work. I know there is still some areas that are being
209 negotiated, but we certainly appreciate the hard work
210 together.

211 So H.R. 8739, the Brownfields Revitalization for a
212 Better Tomorrow Act, is a compromise measure reauthorizing
213 EPA's brownfields grants program, which has enjoyed
214 bipartisan support since first enacted more than 20 years
215 ago. This bill was negotiated between the majority and
216 minority, and includes several bipartisan policy reforms to
217 improve the operation, effectiveness, and accountability of
218 EPA's brownfields program.

219 While the reauthorization funding levels may not be as
220 high as my friends across the aisle would like, they are
221 based on the current appropriation levels enacted by Congress
222 as this program's authorization expired in 2023. Through the
223 regular appropriations process, Congress has not historically

224 funded the EPA brownfields grants at full authorized levels.
225 We will continue to work with our friends in the minority and
226 our colleagues in the Senate to resolve the funding issue for
227 the brownfield grants, but I am glad that on substance we are
228 able to consider a strong bill with important bipartisan
229 program updates today.

230 The second bill we would take up is H.R. 2145, the
231 Recycling Infrastructure Accountability Act sponsored by
232 Representative Miller-Meeks. This bipartisan proposal would
233 establish a pilot program at EPA to help build out waste
234 collection and recycling infrastructure in areas that
235 currently lack household recycling, helping to address
236 plastic and other waste streams, and support recovery of
237 critical materials.

238 Finally, we also plan to consider the bipartisan
239 Recycling and Composting Act -- Accountability Act as an
240 amendment to H.R. 2145. These two measures were previously
241 combined in 2024 end-of-the-year package which fell through.
242 But most importantly, during this Congress the Senate
243 combined these two measures into a single bill, S. 351, known
244 as the STEWARD Act, which passed the Senate by unanimous
245 consent at the end of 2025. Combining the bills today will
246 again unify them into a single measure, increasing the
247 opportunity for getting this bill signed into law.

248 I appreciate the work on both sides of the aisle to

249 prepare for this markup. I again wish the chairman a happy
250 birthday, and I yield back.

251 *Mr. Palmer. The gentleman yields. The chair now
252 recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey's 6th district, the
253 ranking member of the full committee, Representative Pallone,
254 for five minutes for an opening statement.

255 *Mr. Pallone. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

256 Today the subcommittee is marking up three bills, two
257 recycling bills and a bill to reauthorize the brownfields
258 program. Unfortunately, for the first time in the
259 brownfields program's history we are marking up a partisan
260 brownfields bill that cuts crucial funds from the program.

261 Since I partnered with the late Republican
262 Representative Paul Gillmor of Ohio over 20 years ago to
263 write the brownfields law, the program has consistently
264 enjoyed bipartisan support. The brownfields program is an
265 economic engine and an environmental tool for cleaning up
266 former toxic sites, representing a win-win for economic
267 growth and environmental stewardship. Since it was first
268 created I have worked to ensure the program maintains robust
269 funding. And unfortunately, this bill falls far too short of
270 that bar, of that goal.

271 In fact, the version we are marking up includes dramatic
272 funding cuts to the Republicans' own draft bill that was
273 included in the legislative hearing. A diverse group of

274 stakeholders and all witnesses at every brownfields hearing
275 agree that robust funding is necessary to continue the work
276 of the program. Frankly, we should increase funding for
277 brownfields to ensure it continues its record of success.

278 And communities need this funding to get toxic
279 contamination out of their land and water and bring areas
280 back to productive use, which is far more important than
281 funding ballrooms or illegal wars.

282 There are good pieces of this bill that we were able to
283 come to a bipartisan agreement on. We worked across the
284 aisle to raise overall grant levels to keep pace with the
285 increasing complexity of brownfield sites. But the bill
286 removes cost sharing requirements for small and disadvantaged
287 communities and some of the more contentious language on data
288 centers from earlier drafts.

289 So basically, Mr. Chairman, I am urging my Republican
290 colleagues to restore critical funding to ensure this program
291 continues the work of revitalization in districts and
292 communities across the country.

293 Now, we are also considering two bipartisan recycling
294 bills that are steps in the right direction on bolstering our
295 domestic recycling and composting. H.R. 4109, the Recycling
296 and Composting Accountability Act, works to address data gaps
297 and standardize metrics on recycling and composting practices
298 across the nation, which is essential to inform effective

299 policy-makers to improve waste management practices
300 nationwide. And I appreciate the leadership of
301 Representative Neguse for spearheading this effort. And H.R.
302 2145, the Recycling Infrastructure and Accessibility Act,
303 directs EPA to establish a pilot program to increase access
304 to recycling services in underserved communities struggling
305 to keep up with increasing waste management demands.

306 Both of these bills seek to boost important components
307 of our recycling and composting systems, and that is data
308 collection and accessibility. So this is important because
309 our nation's overall recycling and composting rate is only
310 about 32 percent, so these bills are positive steps in the
311 right direction but there is more work to be done.

312 The plastic pollution crisis, for one, is polluting our
313 environment and harming public health by creeping into our
314 waterways, breaking down into harmful -- breaking down
315 harmful microplastics, creating massive challenges for
316 municipal solid waste management recycling programs. And
317 this is something I hear about a lot at home, particularly on
318 the Jersey shore, where I live, as microplastics are
319 polluting the Atlantic and impacting marine life.

320 So we have to explore solutions that match the severity
321 of this crisis, meaning the plastics crisis. So I look
322 forward to sending the recycling bills to the full committee.
323 But my hope, Mr. Chairman, is that my Republican colleagues

324 will address the inadequate levels of funding in the
325 brownfields bill when we get to full committee so it can be a
326 bipartisan success. It has always been bipartisan in the
327 past, and I would like, obviously, to see that happen again.

328 And I yield back the balance of my time.

329 *Mr. Palmer. The gentleman yields. The chair reminds
330 members that, pursuant to the committee rules, all members'
331 opening statements will be made part of the record.

332 Are there further opening statements?

333 The gentlelady from California is recognized for three
334 minutes.

335 *Ms. Barragan. Mr. Chairman, what a disappointment.
336 Families across the country are still living near
337 contaminated sites that need to be cleaned up. We should not
338 compromise on deep cuts to the brownfields program.

339 Brownfields is one of the few programs in Washington
340 that has support from both parties because it works. It
341 helps communities clean up contaminated land, protect public
342 health, and turn abandoned properties into places people can
343 use again. At a time when communities across the country are
344 asking for more help, not less, Republicans want to cut this
345 program in almost half. Apparently, there is always enough
346 money for another billionaire tax break or another Trump
347 vanity project like a ballroom or a war with Iran.

348 When it comes to cleaning up toxic sites in American

349 communities, suddenly Republicans say we can't afford it.
350 That makes no sense to the families who live near these
351 contaminated properties every day.

352 In my district the brownfields program secured a \$1.8
353 million cleanup effort in Carson, California. The funding is
354 helping clean up the former Fletcher Oil and Refining Company
355 site. It is a 36-acre property contaminated by oil in the
356 soil and groundwater after decades of industrial activity.
357 Because of this investment the land can finally be put to
358 productive use again. This site will become part of the Pure
359 Water Southern California Project, one of the largest
360 recycled water projects in the world. That means local jobs
361 and more reliable clean water supply for our communities.

362 Communities in Republican states depend on this program,
363 too. In Maysville, Kentucky, brownfields funding is helping
364 turn an abandoned hospital site into housing. In Ranson,
365 West Virginia, brownfields funding is helping clean up old
366 manufacturing sites so it can be turned into housing, shops,
367 and jobs.

368 This is what the brownfields program does. It takes
369 polluted land that has been sitting unused for years and
370 turns it into something that benefits the community. Cutting
371 this program in almost half will not help working families.
372 It will slow down cleanups. It is going to delay projects
373 and it is going to leave communities behind. We shouldn't be

374 -- we should be investing more in the brownfield program, not
375 less. Let's show the American people where our values are,
376 which is in community.

377 I urge my colleagues to reject this deep proposed cut,
378 and I yield back.

379 *Mr. Palmer. Are there further opening statements?

380 Seeing none, the chair calls up H.R. 8739 and asks the
381 clerk to report.

382 *The Clerk. H.R. 8739, a bill to amend the
383 Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and
384 Liability Act of 1980 with respect to the brownfields
385 revitalization funding, and for other purposes.

386 *Mr. Palmer. Without objection, the first reading of
387 the bill is dispensed with. The bill will be open for
388 amendment at any point.

389 So ordered.

390 [H.R. 8739 follows:]

391

392 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

393

394 *Mr. Palmer. Does anyone seek to be recognized on the
395 bill?

396 For what purpose does the gentleman from Georgia seek
397 recognition?

398 *Mr. Carter of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike
399 the last word.

400 *Mr. Palmer. The gentleman is recognized for five
401 minutes to speak on the bill.

402 *Mr. Carter of Georgia. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

403 Mr. Chairman, the Brownfields Revitalization for a
404 Better Tomorrow Act is a critical piece of legislation that
405 will bolster the program's previous successes while
406 incorporating updates to address the nearly 450,000
407 brownfield sites still remaining across the country, 450,000.

408 This legislation will ensure that we continue the
409 progress we have made with brownfields program while ensuring
410 proper oversight and accountability. For example, it
411 institutes a biannual requirement for the inspector general
412 to conduct reviews of audits of grants made under section
413 104(k) and section 128(a) of the Comprehensive Environmental
414 Response, Compensation, and Liability Act.

415 Brownfields are sites that often have pre-existing
416 infrastructure that allows them to be easily transformed into
417 facilities to produce energy, critical resources, and much
418 more. This bill requires EPA to develop and periodically

419 upgrade guidance to assist other Federal agencies in more
420 efficiently issuing authorizations and conducting
421 environmental reviews for projects on brownfield sites. It
422 also updates the ranking criteria EPA uses to evaluate grant
423 applications to facilitate the reuse of brownfield sites for
424 critical infrastructure and the redevelopment of formerly
425 military -- former military installations.

426 I want to thank Chairman Guthrie for his leadership on
427 this issue, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

428 Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

429 *Mr. Palmer. The gentleman yields. The gentleman from
430 California, Mr. Ruiz, is recognized for five minutes to speak
431 on --

432 *Dr. Ruiz. Mr. Chairman, thank you. I move to strike
433 the last word.

434 Brownfield sites, abandoned industrial facilities, old
435 gas stations, dry cleaners, landfills are not just
436 environmental hazards, they are economic wounds. And as a
437 physician, I can tell you, you do not heal wounds by ignoring
438 them. You clean them. You treat them.

439 In my district alone there are 14 known brownfield
440 sites. Together they have received over \$581,000 in EPA
441 brownfield funding touching communities from Brawley to
442 Twentynine Palms, from El Centro to tribal lands in Riverside
443 County. And that investment goes further than the dollar

444 figure suggests. Nationally, every dollar brownfields
445 funding has leveraged more than \$42 billion in cleanup and
446 redevelopment, and generated over 220,000 jobs.

447 Communities see roughly 10.6 jobs created per \$100,000
448 spent. Applied to California's 25th district, our \$581,000
449 could represent over \$11 million in leveraged economic
450 activity and more than 60 local jobs. That is Federal seed
451 money that multiplies into real opportunity for working
452 families. We have already seen what that looks like. The La
453 Sica property in Brawley, a long vacant contaminated site,
454 was remediated and transformed into a thriving local car
455 repair business. Good-paying jobs, renewed economic
456 activity, restored community dignity, which brings me to what
457 is happening right now.

458 We know these sites cluster in economically distressed
459 communities, places with higher poverty rates, higher
460 unemployment, lower median incomes. That is a legacy of
461 decades of industrial siting decisions that consistently
462 placed the heaviest burdens on the communities less equipped
463 to bear them. When we choose to cut funding from this
464 program, we are making a choice about which communities
465 matter.

466 On March 4 this very committee considered a Republican
467 draft bill, the ones we are considering right now, the
468 Brownfields Revitalization for a Better Tomorrow Act, that

469 actually funded this program at \$200 million. Only 10 weeks
470 later we are voting on a version of this same bill that cuts
471 the brownfields program by over \$75 million. Same committee,
472 same program, same people. My Republican colleagues found
473 \$1.5 trillion for defense and named a resolution the
474 Investing in Rural America Act, but today they can't find \$75
475 million for a program that creates real jobs and real rural
476 communities. This is not a budget decision; this is a values
477 decision. If you stand for rural America, you fund rural
478 America. You don't put its name on a bill one week and cut
479 its lifeline the next.

480 This has always been a bipartisan program, and this
481 committee has always treated it this way. In its entire
482 history the Energy and Commerce Committee has never cut
483 authorization funds for the brownfields until today. It is
484 extremely disappointing that House Republicans are breaking
485 that tradition, and that the communities who will pay the
486 price are the ones that can least afford it.

487 And I yield back.

488 *Mr. Palmer. The gentleman yields. Does anyone else --

489 *The Chair. Mr. Chair?

490 *Mr. Palmer. The chair recognizes the gentleman from
491 Kentucky, the chairman of the full committee, for five
492 minutes to speak on the bill.

493 *The Chair. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to

494 speak in favor of my bill, the Brownfields Revitalization
495 Act, for a Better Tomorrow.

496 The Environment Subcommittee has undertaken a deliberate
497 process to develop the legislation we are considering today,
498 including multiple hearings meeting one on one with EPA,
499 states, local communities, and other stakeholders, and
500 receiving feedback on a series of discussion drafts released
501 earlier this year.

502 This bill includes many bipartisan reforms, including
503 identifying and prioritizing use of brownfield sites for
504 needed infrastructure projects, increasing the dollar amounts
505 for individual grant awards, updating how these funds can be
506 used to better support cleanup and reuse of sites, and
507 increasing oversight by the EPA inspector general and the
508 Government Accountability Office.

509 While more work does remain ahead on authorization
510 levels, to be clear this bill does not cut the actual funding
511 for the brownfields program. The authorization levels,
512 including in this legislation, reflect the most recent level
513 of appropriations enacted by Congress: about \$170 million in
514 total. We will spend -- the authorization is what we are
515 currently spending. The reforms in the bill are long
516 overdue, and I appreciate the work that has gone into getting
517 us this far, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

518 And I will yield back.

519 *Mr. Palmer. The gentleman yields. The chair
520 recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey, the ranking member
521 of the full committee, Mr. Pallone, for five minutes to speak
522 on the bill.

523 *Mr. Pallone. Thank you, and let me say in all due
524 respect to Chairman Guthrie, I understand that you are
525 bringing the authorization levels down to the appropriations
526 levels, but that is not what we should be doing.

527 I mean, first of all, I don't believe we should defer to
528 the appropriators. Often times they appropriate inadequately
529 relative to the authorization levels that we set. But that
530 shouldn't be the basis for our action. Our action should be
531 based on what we think should be authorized, and then we try
532 -- or at least I try to get the appropriators to move as much
533 as possible towards those authorization levels. So, you
534 know, I don't want to be dictated by the appropriators,
535 particularly when they are cutting the funding significantly
536 below what I think we should be authorizing.

537 So the brownfields program, as I said, is an economic
538 lifeline for communities looking to clean up contamination
539 and revitalize their neighborhoods. Since its inception,
540 more than 42,000 brownfield sites have been revitalized and
541 made ready for development around the nation, and these
542 projects leverage nearly 230,000 jobs and more than \$44
543 billion in economic development.

544 Now, working together with the majority we were able to
545 increase grant amounts across the board to tackle harder-to-
546 reach sites, eliminate the cost share requirements that made
547 it difficult for small and disadvantaged communities to apply
548 for grants, and broaden the scope of how you could use the
549 grants to allow more flexibility for grantees as they tackle
550 these complex sites. And we even found common ground on a
551 new program for small community technical assistance,
552 increasing audits and reporting expanding the state
553 brownfields inventories and making them public. But the
554 problem is that those gains now take a back seat because of
555 the funding cuts that were suddenly included in their bill,
556 cuts from what Chairman Guthrie actually proposed in the
557 initial bill.

558 So this amount was not in the legislative draft, not in
559 the bipartisan Senate bill, and not part of any negotiation
560 or stakeholder agreements. The over \$75 billion cuts -- and
561 I understand they are cuts in authorization, but that is what
562 we deal with -- they run counter to the broad understanding
563 of the value of the program and its ability to spur economic
564 development, because everything about the brownfields cuts
565 is, frankly, disappointing.

566 I just want to remind my colleagues that every dollar
567 the Federal Government invests in the brownfields program, we
568 get roughly \$20 back in economic return and showcasing the

569 win-win scenario that the program produces. So I just hope
570 we can all agree that this program was more than worth every
571 dollar we put into it, even though the bill today does not
572 demonstrate that. And I would urge the chairman and my
573 colleagues to come back to the table and fully fund this
574 program at the levels necessary to get the work done.

575 So I can't support a bill, this bill, that cuts a
576 critical lifeline for our district so they can have access to
577 the funds to remediate and redevelop former toxic sites and
578 bring them back to economic use. And until that funding is
579 restored, I would urge my colleagues to oppose the bill.

580 I yield back.

581 *The Chair. Will the gentleman yield?

582 *Mr. Pallone. Yes, of course.

583 *The Chair. So I want to thank you for your remarks and
584 for your support of the underlying policy of the bill. I
585 understand our differences in the authorization levels, but I
586 do appreciate the hard work that you have done, our staffs
587 has done, and just want to point out that we agree -- I don't
588 want to put words in your mouth -- we agree on the underlying
589 policy that is in the bill. The difference is the
590 authorization levels. And this does reflect current House
591 appropriations and intended to -- it is -- that is House
592 protocol, and reasonable minds can differ on what the
593 appropriation authorization could be in this bill.

594 We have heard repeatedly that the program is over-
595 subscribed with significant interest, with more quality
596 applications than can be satisfied. We understand that. I
597 would also note that the Senate is working on reauthorizing
598 this program and is, in fact, considering a higher
599 authorization level than we are voting on today. So I know
600 that we will continue to work. We will also work with the
601 Senate, and I look forward to working with you and our
602 colleagues in the House and the Senate, and we will develop a
603 bipartisan, bicameral compromise that I believe in the end we
604 can all support.

605 So thank you, and I will yield back to you, Mr. Ranking
606 Member.

607 *Mr. Pallone. I appreciate that, and thank you, Mr.
608 Chairman. I yield back.

609 *Mr. Palmer. The gentleman yields. Does anyone else
610 wish to speak on the bill?

611 The gentleman from New Jersey is recognized to speak on
612 the bill for five minutes.

613 *Mr. Menendez. Thank you, Chairman.

614 EPA brownfields is historically a bipartisan program
615 that helps local leaders in New Jersey do incredible work to
616 revitalize our communities and improve quality of life for
617 working families. Brownfields funding helps turn landfills
618 into community parks. It helps turn abandoned, contaminated

619 industrial sites into affordable housing, new businesses, or
620 even solar farms that provide our communities with cheap,
621 clean energy.

622 So I am incredibly disappointed that at the eleventh
623 hour Republicans have decided to cut the funding
624 authorization for this program in half. They are turning
625 their backs on this program and the communities that need it
626 to thrive, despite the fact that many local leaders and
627 expert witnesses have told this committee that the program
628 desperately needs additional resources, not less.

629 Let me read some testimony from Mayor Bollwage of
630 Elizabeth, New Jersey, which I have the privilege of
631 representing. When Mayor Bollwage came before this committee
632 in 2025 he called the brownfields program "a community game-
633 changer.'" But he also told this committee that "The only
634 downside is that the majority of grant applications are not
635 funded due to a lack of resources.'" And yet, for the first
636 time in the history of the successful bipartisan and popular
637 program, Republicans are choosing to mark up a partisan bill
638 and cut its funding. This is on top of other funding cuts
639 that they have made in this Congress cutting \$1 trillion from
640 health care for Americans.

641 And let's talk about what Republicans are willing to
642 fund at historic levels. Republicans voted to create a \$170
643 billion slush fund for ICE and immigration enforcement, which

644 is being used to terrorize our communities and tear families
645 apart. And apparently, that was still not enough for House
646 Republicans because just two weeks ago they voted to
647 greenlight another \$70 billion in funding for immigration
648 enforcement.

649 Republicans on this committee are also fine with writing
650 a blank check for the Trump Administration's war in Iran that
651 was not authorized by Congress, a war that some estimates say
652 has already cost \$80 billion. And more recently they have
653 had nothing to say about whether taxpayers should foot the
654 bill for the President's ballroom or about a no-bid contract
655 to paint the Lincoln Memorial's reflecting pool bright blue.
656 That is just how disconnected House Republicans are from the
657 priorities of the American people.

658 So while I am glad to see many welcome reforms in this
659 bill, including increased grant caps that will help our
660 communities take on more ambitious projects and remediate
661 more contaminated sites, I am also glad to see that
662 Republicans threw out many of the worst ideas from their
663 original discussion draft, and I am a strong supporter of
664 this program. As I said in March, I would be thrilled to
665 work with my Republican colleagues on a bipartisan bill.
666 Unfortunately, I cannot support unprecedented cuts to this
667 program, cuts that will mean fewer affordable homes, fewer
668 community parks, and less investment in communities like

669 Elizabeth.

670 You know, House Democrats are going to continue to push
671 for priorities that uplift communities across the country,
672 that uplift the American people, but we are just waiting for
673 our Republicans to come to the table and do the same.

674 With that I yield back.

675 *Mr. Palmer. The gentleman yields. Does anyone else
676 wish to speak on the bill?

677 The gentleman from Florida, Mr. Soto, is recognized for
678 five minutes to speak on the bill.

679 *Mr. Soto. Thank you, Chairman.

680 You know, a lot of people may not realize in the
681 training up until and through World War II we had tens of
682 thousands of soldiers come to central Florida to train on
683 their way to Europe to defend democracy and defeat the Nazis.
684 Places like Pinecastle Bombing Range and Army Airfield hosted
685 thousands of these soldiers over the years.

686 And in the wake of this huge victory for our country and
687 for the world, we saw brownfields throughout central Florida.
688 These areas have become theme parks, our airport, and local
689 neighborhoods, and have flourished. But it took a lot of
690 incentives to help move this along. When you are investing
691 private dollars it is a high risk going into a piece of land
692 that might have been polluted. And when you get the
693 environmental surveys, it is really uncertain what you might

694 be facing.

695 And so it is so important, this partnership between the
696 government and with local businesses to help incentivize
697 reusing these brownfields. And the grant levels are low in
698 this current bill. I do applaud the use of cost sharing for
699 small towns. We have seen in central Florida that urban and
700 suburban areas have leveraged brownfield funds far more
701 successfully than the rural areas because of the bar to
702 entry. And so this pilot program also for rural communities
703 will be helpful.

704 But we can do better. A \$75 million cut, when we were
705 in the process of talking about a \$250 million increase to
706 the brownfields revitalization program, is something that we
707 have to do better on. This is a great potential jobs bill,
708 if done right.

709 And we are the authorizers. We are not subservient to
710 the appropriators. We need to do what we think is right.
711 Unemployment is rising. So is inflation. And so this is an
712 opportunity for us to turn the corner and invest in our
713 communities, especially to help revitalize communities that
714 have been left behind.

715 And with that I yield back.

716 *Mr. Palmer. Does anyone else wish to speak on the
717 bill?

718 I will recognize ask myself for five minutes. For

719 clarity and accuracy's sake, there are no cuts in spending.
720 What the bill does is match authorization to appropriated
721 spending. We will continue to spend what we have been
722 spending.

723 I yield back. Are there any amendments?

724 Seeing none, the question now occurs on adopting H.R.
725 8739.

726 All those in favor, say aye.

727 Those opposed, no.

728 The ayes have it, and the bill is adopted and forwarded
729 to the full committee.

730 The chair calls up H.R. 2145 and asks the clerk to
731 report.

732 *The Clerk. H.R. 2145, a bill to establish a pilot
733 grant program to improve recycling, accessibility, and for
734 other purposes.

735 *Mr. Palmer. Without objection, the first reading of
736 the bill is dispensed with, and the bill will be open for
737 amendment at any point.

738 So ordered.

739 [H.R. 2145 follows:]

740

741 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

742

743 *Mr. Palmer. Does anyone seek to be recognized on the
744 bill?

745 For what purpose does gentlelady seek recognition?

746 *Mrs. Miller-Meeks. I move to strike the last word.

747 *Mr. Palmer. The gentlelady is recognized.

748 *Mrs. Miller-Meeks. Thank you, Chairman Palmer, for
749 bringing up this important bill to mark up.

750 As a representative from Iowa, I know firsthand the
751 challenges rural communities face in accessing recycling
752 services. Over 36 percent of Iowa households lack access to
753 recycling, and that is over 450,000 families. This is an
754 economic and a national security imperative. Iowa's
755 manufacturing sector depends on recycled materials as
756 feedstocks, yet we are watching China and other competitors
757 purchase our scrap at above-market prices while our own
758 factories struggle to source domestic materials.

759 The data shows we are landfilling millions of tons of
760 valuable manufacturing materials every year, materials that
761 should be creating jobs and strengthening supply chains right
762 here in America. In Iowa alone we are capturing less than
763 half of our aluminum cans and only 15 percent of our steel
764 cans. And for information, 90 percent of American steel and
765 aluminum is from recycled material. So that is not just
766 waste, it is lost economic opportunity for our manufacturers
767 and increased dependance on foreign suppliers.

768 This challenge extends beyond traditional materials. We
769 recycle and keep critical materials and critical minerals in
770 American hands, not ship them overseas. That is why I have
771 introduced the Recycling Infrastructure and Accessibility
772 Act. RIAA would establish a pilot grant program specifically
773 targeting communities like many in my district, those without
774 a recycling facility within 75 miles. This bipartisan
775 legislation has earned endorsements from industry leaders
776 here today, environmental groups, and manufacturers who
777 understand that recycling infrastructure is manufacturing
778 infrastructure, and that domestic material supply is economic
779 security.

780 I urge my colleagues on this committee to support RIAA
781 and advance it to the full committee. Our rural communities,
782 our manufacturers, and our economy cannot wait any longer for
783 the infrastructure they need to keep American materials and
784 American supply chains.

785 Thank you, and I yield back.

786 *Mr. Palmer. The gentlelady yields. Does anyone else
787 seek recognition?

788 Mr. Carter from Louisiana is recognized for five minutes
789 to speak on the bill.

790 *Mr. Carter of Louisiana. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
791 am proud to cosponsor H.R. 2145, the Recycling Infrastructure
792 and Accessibility Act of 2025.

793 This bill makes targeted, common-sense investments in
794 the recycling programs that rural and underserved communities
795 in Louisiana across this country desperately need. We know
796 that recycling works when communities have access to it, but
797 right now too many of our communities have little to no
798 curbside recycling, no drop-off facilities, and no path
799 forward without Federal support. This bill can change that.

800 A recent study by the Recycling Partnership found that
801 Louisiana and the Gulf Coast region are among the best in the
802 country for end market for recycling -- end markets for
803 recycling materials. We have large fiber mills, as well as
804 aluminum, glass, and plastic producers ready and waiting to
805 buy what other communities collect. The demand and market
806 are here, right in our communities. What is missing is the
807 infrastructure to get materials from our neighborhoods to
808 those facilities. This bill will help close that gap.

809 By investing in recycling infrastructure programs in
810 rural and underserved areas, this bill fuels economy --
811 economic growth while serving our environment. It can put
812 recycled -- recyclable materials back into Louisiana's
813 manufacturing supply chain, creating jobs and economic
814 opportunity. Louisiana is ready, the market is ready, and it
815 is time for Congress to make the investment in our
816 communities that we need to fuel this economic growth and
817 build a cleaner, stronger community; cleaner, stronger

818 environment. And I urge my colleagues to support this
819 common-sense, well-needed bill.

820 I yield.

821 *Mr. Palmer. The gentleman yields. Does anyone else
822 seek recognition to speak on the bill?

823 Are there any amendments?

824 The gentleman from Colorado, Mr. Evans, is recognized.

825 *Mr. Evans. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the
826 desk, RIAA_01.

827 *Mr. Palmer. The clerk will report the amendment.

828 *The Clerk. Amendment to 2145 offered by Mr. Evans of
829 Colorado.

830 *Mr. Palmer. Without objection, the reading of the
831 amendment is dispensed with, and the gentleman is recognized
832 for five minutes in support of the amendment.

833 [The amendment of Mr. Evans follows:]

834

835 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

836

837 *Mr. Evans. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

838 This amendment to H.R. 2145, the Recycling
839 Infrastructure and Accessibility Act, would add bipartisan
840 provisions to harmonize the bill with legislation that has
841 previously passed in the United States Senate.

842 The amendment directs the EPA to coordinate with state,
843 local, and tribal governments to collect data related to
844 composting and recycling in the United States, and to compile
845 a nationwide inventory of materials recovered -- materials
846 recovery facilities every four years.

847 Additionally, my amendment allows the EPA to develop a
848 standardized estimated rate of recyclable materials that have
849 been brought to recycling or composting facilities, as well
850 as an estimated annual national recycling rate. The
851 intention is to arm the EPA with the data and authorization
852 it needs to collaborate with states, cities, and tribes
853 across America to help improve composting and recycling
854 rates. By strengthening recycling systems and improving
855 information collection on recyclable materials and
856 composting, Congress can not only reduce reliance on
857 landfills, but we can also enhance domestic manufacturing
858 supply chains.

859 In 2024 Colorado recycled just 15 percent of its
860 municipal waste, lagging severely behind other states due to
861 factors like mismanagement at the state level and isolated

862 pockets of communities across our geographically diverse
863 state. Policies like this can help address the lackluster
864 recycling rate, create jobs, and improve the circular
865 economy.

866 As this subcommittee works to advance common-sense
867 legislation to support the expansion of advanced recycling, I
868 am proud to offer this amendment to build on the great work
869 my colleague from Iowa has done. I urge bipartisan support
870 and yield back.

871 *Mr. Palmer. The gentleman yields. Is there discussion
872 of the amendment?

873 If there is no further discussion, the vote on the
874 amendment occurs.

875 All those in favor will signify by saying aye.

876 All those opposed, nay.

877 The ayes have it, and the amendment is agreed to.

878 Are there further amendments?

879 The question now occurs on adopting H.R. 2145, as
880 amended.

881 All those in favor, say aye.

882 Those opposed, no.

883 The ayes have it, and the bill is adopted and forwarded
884 to the full committee.

885 The staff has authority to make all conforming and
886 technical changes.

887 The committee stands adjourned.

888 [Whereupon, at 10:59 a.m., the Subcommittee was

889 adjourned.]