

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery  
of  
Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.**

***Markup of 3 Bills, Subcommittee on Environment***

**May 14, 2026**

Today the Subcommittee is marking up three bills – two recycling bills and a bill to reauthorize the Brownfields Program. Unfortunately, for the first time in the Brownfields Program’s history, we are marking up a partisan Brownfields bill that cuts crucial funds from the program.

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

In fact, the version we are marking up includes dramatic funding cuts to the Republicans’ own draft bill that was included in the legislative hearing. A diverse group of stakeholders and all witnesses at every Brownfields hearing agree that robust funding is necessary to continue the work of this program. Frankly, we should increase funding for Brownfields to ensure it continues its record of success.

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

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

So, I urge my Republican colleagues to restore critical funding to ensure this program continues the critical work of revitalization in districts communities across the country.

We are also considering two bipartisan recycling bills that are steps in the right direction on bolstering our domestic recycling and composting systems. H.R. 4109, the “Recycling Composting Accountability Act,” works to address data gaps and standardize metrics on recycling and composting practices across the nation, which is essential to inform effective

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policymaking to improve waste management practices nationwide. I appreciate the leadership of Representative Neguse for spearheading this effort.

H.R. 2145, the “Recycling Infrastructure and Accessibility Act,” directs EPA to establish a pilot program to increase access to recycling services in underserved communities struggling to keep up with increasing waste management demands.

Both of these bills seek to boost important components of our recycling and composting systems – data collection and accessibility. This is important because our nation’s overall recycling and composting rate is just 32 percent.

These bills are positive steps in the right direction, but there is much more work to be done. The plastic pollution crisis, for one, is polluting our environment and harming public health by creeping into our waterways, breaking down into harmful microplastics, and creating massive challenges for municipal solid waste management recycling programs. This is something I hear a lot about back at home, especially on the Jersey shore, as microplastics are polluting the Atlantic and impacting marine life.

We must explore solutions that match the severity of this crisis.

I look forward to sending the recycling bills to the Full Committee, but I hope my Republican colleagues will address the inadequate levels of funding in the Brownfields bill so it can be a bipartisan success just as it has been in the past.

I yield back the balance of my time.