

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee Ranking Member Paul D. Tonko

Markup of 3 Bills, Subcommittee on Environment

May 14, 2026

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Today the Environment Subcommittee will consider three bills to address pressing environmental and economic challenges facing our nation. H.R. 2145, the Recycling Infrastructure and Accessibility Act, led by Congresswoman Miller-Meeks, and H.R. 4109, the Recycling and Composting Accountability Act, led by Congressman Neguse, are bipartisan bills to improve recycling systems in the United States.

The RIAA would establish a pilot program at the EPA to award grants to improve recycling accessibility in underserved and rural communities. And the RCAA would improve data collection on our nation's recycling systems and explore the potential of a national composting strategy. The legislation would require EPA to collect and publish data on recycling and composting rates to provide an accurate reflection of performance both nationwide and at the state level.

Both bills are supported by a diverse coalition of stakeholders and have been passed by the Senate several times over the past three Congresses. While these bills will not fix all of the issues with our nation's recycling and waste systems, I believe they are an important first step to addressing some of the most obvious shortcomings. I look forward to these bills finally getting over the finish line and enacted this year.

Unfortunately, I have concerns with the third bill before us today, H.R. 8739, the Brownfields Revitalization for a Better Tomorrow Act. EPA's Brownfields Program has a long history of bipartisan support. It provides critical resources to state and local governments to support the remediation of blighted properties, which increases property values and local tax revenue, preserves greenfields, and creates jobs. And there are aspects of the bill before us today that would improve the program and align with priorities identified during our legislative hearing in March.

This includes increasing the maximum award limit to \$1 million and waiving cost-share requirements for awards to disadvantaged and small communities. These reforms will allow more communities to be able to access the program and enable them to tackle more complex and costly sites.

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I sincerely appreciate that the majority has worked with us on these, and other, aspects of the bill. But unfortunately, the bill also includes significant funding cuts to the program's authorization levels, which I cannot support.

H.R. 8739 would reduce the authorization level of EPA's grant program from \$200 million to \$123.5 million annually. Similarly, it would reduce the State Response program authorization from \$50 million to \$46.25 million annually. Not only are these funding levels lower than the bipartisan agreement that has already been advanced by our counterparts in the Senate, but they are also below what the majority had proposed in their discussion draft from our March legislative hearing.

It is hard to understand why such a cut would be warranted. Everyone agrees this program is effective, and every hearing witness testified that the program should have more funding, not less, especially as state and local governments prepare to tackle more complex sites with higher award amounts.

This program has always been bipartisan, and I hope we can work together before Full Committee to restore this funding.

Thank you. I yield back.