

Chairman Brett Guthrie
Opening Statement—Subcommittee on Environment
“Beyond the Blue Bin: Forging a Federal Landscape for Recycling
Innovation and Economic Growth.”
July 16, 2025
As prepared for delivery

Good morning, Members of the Subcommittee on the Environment and to our witnesses. Congratulations, Chairman Palmer, on your new role as Chairman of the Subcommittee. Thank you for your leadership this Congress in highlighting the importance of domestic supply chains for critical minerals and investigating the Biden-Harris Administration’s Green New Deal Programs, and I look forward to working with you in this new role.

Our world is constantly changing, and today we will hear whether our country’s waste management policies will enable us to embrace the challenges of the future.

For example, we are seeing incredible growth in data centers needed to support artificial intelligence infrastructure, but will our waste and recycling laws allow us to manage an expected uptick in electronic waste and how can we recover valuable materials such as critical minerals from items that are discarded every day?

Additionally, how do we keep the U.S. economy as a global leader in the face of international negotiations that could limit the production and use of plastics and chemicals and place U.S. companies at a disadvantage against Chinese and European competitors?

I look forward to hearing from our panel of witnesses – which includes Mr. Bedingfield from Louisville, KY – on these important questions.

While our country is constantly faced with new challenges, thanks to American entrepreneurship and a spirit of innovation, we are also presented with new opportunities.

Improving our recycling infrastructure could enhance our global economic competitiveness and national security. For example, according to the Recycled Materials Association, the recycled materials industry has a nearly \$169 billion economic impact in the United States.¹

New technologies involving artificial intelligence and robotics have improved sorting capabilities for recyclable products like paper. Advanced recycling technologies enable the conversion of difficult-to-recycle plastics into new products that improve our quality of life.

Today's hearing will provide us with the chance to assess regulatory barriers to the proliferation of new technologies and strategies to grow our domestic manufacturing capabilities while keeping valuable materials out of landfills.

I look forward to today's discussion.

¹ <https://www.recycledmaterials.org/our-impact/#:~:text=Recycling%20creates%20jobs%2C%20advances%20U.S.,interactive%20map%20and%20database%20below>.