

Chairman Gary Palmer
Opening Statement—Subcommittee on Environment
“Beyond the Blue Bin: Forging a Federal Landscape for Recycling
Innovation and Economic Growth.”
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As prepared for delivery

Good morning, and welcome to today’s subcommittee hearing entitled “Beyond the Blue Bin: Forging a Federal Landscape for Recycling Innovation and Economic Growth.”

Before we begin, I’d like to thank Chairman Guthrie for the opportunity to lead the Environment Subcommittee. I’d also like to thank Chairman Griffith for his excellent leadership of the Subcommittee and wish him the best as the new Chairman of the Subcommittee on Health. And to my new Ranking Member, Mr. Tonko, I look forward to working with you.

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, I focused on the importance of critical minerals to our national security and holding the Environmental Protection Agency accountable. I look forward to continuing that important work in this new role.

Waste and recycling are generally considered to be regional issues, regulated at the state and local level. However, we will hear testimony today about the national and economic security implications of recycling policy.

In his first days in office, President Trump emphasized the need to secure our critical mineral and material supply chains. We must use an all-of-the-above approach when it comes to ensuring our

ability to access these critical minerals and materials, which is why electronic waste (e-waste) is so important for our future.

With the growth of data centers and use of technology, e-waste is accumulating at higher rates every year, with billions of dollars in losses as this technology reaches its end of life. E-waste is a commodity that can be repurposed in our fight to not only be energy independent, but energy dominant.

Let me be clear – we will not recycle our way out of these issues. However, as we look to build out our mining capacities, e-waste recycling innovation provides vital short and long-term support for our needs as a nation.

The President also issued an executive order on the importance of “Putting America First in International Environmental Agreements.”

As part of the negotiations for the global plastics treaty, the Biden-Harris administration announced support for bans on plastics and a cap on plastic production. That would not be in America’s interest.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about the role that American businesses can play in innovating and developing technologies to address environmental pollution.

The threat China poses to the United States and our allies cannot be overstated. We will hear from our witnesses today on how we can use recycling as a tool to compete with China and protect our communities.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here today. It is my understanding we have not had a hearing on this topic in some time, and I appreciate my colleagues engaging on this important issue for my first hearing as Chairman. I look forward to our discussion, and now recognize the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, Mr. Tonko, for his opening statement.