

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 351

AN ACT

To establish a pilot grant program to improve recycling accessibility, to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to carry out certain activities to collect and disseminate data on recycling and composting programs in the United States, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
 2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Strategies To Eliminate Waste and Accelerate Recycling Development Act of
 5 2025” or the “STEWARD Act of 2025”.

7 **SEC. 2. RECYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACCESSIBILITY**
 8 **IMPROVEMENTS.**

9 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

10 (1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-
 11 trator” means the Administrator of the Environ-
 12 mental Protection Agency.

13 (2) CURBSIDE RECYCLING.—The term
 14 “curbside recycling” means the process by which
 15 residential recyclable materials are picked up
 16 curbside.

17 (3) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
 18 ty” means—

19 (A) a State (as defined in section 1004 of
 20 the Solid Waste Disposal Act (42 U.S.C.
 21 6903));

22 (B) a unit of local government;

23 (C) an Indian Tribe; and

1 (D) a public-private partnership or entities
2 seeking to establish a public-private partner-
3 ship.

4 (4) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian Tribe”
5 has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the
6 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance
7 Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

8 (5) MATERIALS RECOVERY FACILITY.—

9 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “materials
10 recovery facility” means a dedicated facility
11 where primarily residential recyclable materials,
12 which are diverted from disposal by a generator
13 and collected separately from municipal solid
14 waste, are mechanically or manually sorted into
15 commodities for further processing into speci-
16 fication-grade commodities for sale to end
17 users.

18 (B) EXCLUSION.—The term “materials re-
19 covery facility” does not include a solid waste
20 management facility that may process munic-
21 ipal solid waste to remove recyclable materials.

22 (6) PILOT GRANT PROGRAM.—The term “pilot
23 grant program” means the Recycling Infrastructure
24 and Accessibility Program established under sub-
25 section (b).

1 (7) RECYCLABLE MATERIAL.—The term “recy-
2 clable material” means a material that is obsolete,
3 previously used, off-specification, surplus, or inciden-
4 tally produced for processing into a specification-
5 grade commodity for which a reuse market currently
6 exists or is being developed.

7 (8) TRANSFER STATION.—The term “transfer
8 station” means a facility that—

9 (A) receives and consolidates recyclable
10 material from curbside recycling or drop-off fa-
11 cilities; and

12 (B) loads the recyclable material onto trac-
13 tor trailers, railcars, or barges for transport to
14 a distant materials recovery facility or another
15 recycling-related facility.

16 (9) UNDERSERVED COMMUNITY.—The term
17 “underserved community” means a community, in-
18 cluding an unincorporated area, without access to
19 full recycling services because—

20 (A) transportation, distance, or other rea-
21 sons render utilization of available processing
22 capacity at an existing materials recovery facil-
23 ity cost prohibitive; or

24 (B) the processing capacity of an existing
25 materials recovery facility is insufficient to

1 manage the volume of recyclable materials pro-
2 duced by that community.

3 (b) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 18 months
4 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator
5 shall establish a pilot grant program, to be known as the
6 “Recycling Infrastructure and Accessibility Program”, to
7 award grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible entities
8 to improve recycling accessibility in a community or com-
9 munities within the same geographic area.

10 (c) GOAL.—The goal of the pilot grant program is
11 to fund eligible projects that will significantly improve ac-
12 cessibility to recycling systems through investments in in-
13 frastructure in underserved communities through the use
14 of a hub-and-spoke model for recycling infrastructure de-
15 velopment.

16 (d) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to receive a grant
17 under the pilot grant program, an eligible entity shall sub-
18 mit to the Administrator an application at such time, in
19 such manner, and containing such information as the Ad-
20 ministrator may require.

21 (e) CONSIDERATIONS.—In selecting eligible entities
22 to receive a grant under the pilot grant program, the Ad-
23 ministrator shall consider—

1 (1) whether the community or communities in
2 which the eligible entity is seeking to carry out a
3 proposed project has curbside recycling;

4 (2) whether the proposed project of the eligible
5 entity will improve accessibility to recycling services
6 in a single underserved community or multiple un-
7 derserved communities; and

8 (3)(A) if the eligible entity is a public-private
9 partnership, the financial health of the private entity
10 seeking to enter into that public-private partnership;
11 or

12 (B) if the eligible entity is seeking to establish
13 a public-private partnership, the financial health of
14 the private entities that would participate in the
15 public-private partnership.

16 (f) PRIORITY.—In selecting eligible entities to receive
17 a grant under the pilot grant program, the Administrator
18 shall give priority to eligible entities seeking to carry out
19 a proposed project in a community in which there is not
20 more than 1 materials recovery facility within a 75-mile
21 radius of that community.

22 (g) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity awarded a
23 grant under the pilot grant program may use the grant
24 funds for projects to improve recycling accessibility in
25 communities, including in underserved communities, by—

1 (1) increasing the number of transfer stations;

2 (2) expanding curbside recycling collection pro-
3 grams where appropriate; and

4 (3) leveraging public-private partnerships to re-
5 duce the costs associated with collecting and trans-
6 porting recyclable materials in underserved commu-
7 nities.

8 (h) PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible
9 entity awarded a grant under the pilot grant program may
10 not use the grant funds for projects relating to recycling
11 education programs.

12 (i) MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNT.—A
13 grant awarded to an eligible entity under the pilot grant
14 program shall be in an amount—

15 (1) not less than \$500,000; and

16 (2) not more than \$15,000,000.

17 (j) SET-ASIDE.—The Administrator shall set aside
18 not less than 70 percent of the amounts made available
19 to carry out the pilot grant program for each fiscal year
20 to award grants to eligible entities to carry out a proposed
21 project or program in a single underserved community or
22 multiple underserved communities.

23 (k) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the cost
24 of a project or program carried out by an eligible entity
25 using grant funds shall be not more than 95 percent.

1 (l) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date
2 on which the first grant is awarded under the pilot grant
3 program, the Administrator shall submit to Congress a re-
4 port describing the implementation of the pilot grant pro-
5 gram, which shall include—

6 (1) a list of eligible entities that have received
7 a grant under the pilot grant program;

8 (2) the actions taken by each eligible entity that
9 received a grant under the pilot grant program to
10 improve recycling accessibility with grant funds; and

11 (3) to the extent information is available, a de-
12 scription of how grant funds received under the pilot
13 grant program improved recycling rates in each com-
14 munity in which a project or program was carried
15 out under the pilot grant program.

16 (m) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be
18 appropriated to the Administrator to carry out the
19 pilot grant program \$30,000,000 for each of fiscal
20 years 2025 through 2029, to remain available until
21 expended.

22 (2) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS AND TECHNICAL
23 ASSISTANCE.—Of the amounts made available under
24 paragraph (1), the Administrator may use up to 5
25 percent—

1 (A) for administrative costs relating to car-
 2 rying out the pilot grant program; and

3 (B) to provide technical assistance to eligi-
 4 ble entities applying for a grant under the pilot
 5 grant program.

6 **SEC. 3. RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING DATA COLLECTION.**

7 (a) DEFINITIONS.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—In this section:

9 (A) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Admin-
 10 istrator” means the Administrator of the Envi-
 11 ronmental Protection Agency.

12 (B) COMPOST.—The term “compost”
 13 means a product that—

14 (i) is manufactured through the con-
 15 trolled aerobic, biological decomposition of
 16 biodegradable materials;

17 (ii) has been subjected to medium and
 18 high temperature organisms, which—

19 (I) significantly reduce the viabil-
 20 ity of pathogens and weed seeds; and

21 (II) stabilize carbon in the prod-
 22 uct such that the product is beneficial
 23 to plant growth; and

1 (iii) is typically used as a soil amend-
2 ment, but may also contribute plant nutri-
3 ents.

4 (C) COMPOSTABLE MATERIAL.—The term
5 “compostable material” means material that is
6 a feedstock for creating compost, including—

7 (i) wood;

8 (ii) agricultural crops;

9 (iii) paper, such as cardboard and
10 other paper products;

11 (iv) certified compostable products as-
12 sociated with organic waste;

13 (v) other organic plant material;

14 (vi) organic waste, including food
15 waste and yard waste; and

16 (vii) such other material that is com-
17 posed of biomass that can be continually
18 replenished or renewed, as determined by
19 the Administrator.

20 (D) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian
21 Tribe” has the meaning given the term in sec-
22 tion 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and
23 Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

24 (E) RECYCLABLE MATERIAL.—The term
25 “recyclable material” means a material that is

1 obsolete, previously used, off-specification, sur-
2 plus, or incidentally produced for processing
3 into a specification-grade commodity for which
4 a reuse market currently exists or is being de-
5 veloped.

6 (F) RECYCLING.—The term “recycling”
7 means the series of activities—

8 (i) during which recyclable materials
9 are processed into specification-grade com-
10 modities and consumed as raw-material
11 feedstock, in lieu of virgin materials, in the
12 manufacturing of new products;

13 (ii) that may, with regard to recyc-la-
14 ble materials and prior to the activities de-
15 scribed in clause (i), include sorting, collec-
16 tion, processing, and brokering; and

17 (iii) that result, subsequent to proc-
18 essing described in clause (i), in consump-
19 tion by a materials manufacturer, includ-
20 ing for the manufacturing of new products.

21 (G) STATE.—The term “State” has the
22 meaning given the term in section 1004 of the
23 Solid Waste Disposal Act (42 U.S.C. 6903).

24 (2) DEFINITION OF PROCESSING.—In subpara-
25 graphs (E) and (F) of paragraph (1), the term

1 “processing” means any mechanical, manual, or
2 other method that—

3 (A) transforms a recyclable material into a
4 specification-grade commodity; and

5 (B) may occur in multiple steps, with dif-
6 ferent phases, including sorting, occurring at
7 different locations.

8 (b) REPORTS ON COMPOSTING AND RECYCLING IN-
9 FRASTRUCTURE CAPABILITIES.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle D of the Solid
11 Waste Disposal Act (42 U.S.C. 6941 et seq.) is
12 amended by adding at the end the following:

13 **“SEC. 4011. REPORTS ON COMPOSTING AND RECYCLING IN-**
14 **FRASTRUCTURE CAPABILITIES.**

15 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

16 “(1) INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN TERMS.—
17 The terms ‘compost’, ‘compostable material’, ‘recy-
18 clable material’, and ‘recycling’ have the meanings
19 given the terms in section 3(a) of the Strategies To
20 Eliminate Waste and Accelerate Recycling Develop-
21 ment Act of 2025.

22 “(2) COMPOSTING FACILITY.—The term
23 ‘composting facility’ means a location, structure, or
24 device that transforms compostable materials into
25 compost.

1 “(3) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term ‘Indian Tribe’
2 has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the
3 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance
4 Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

5 “(4) MATERIALS RECOVERY FACILITY.—

6 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘materials
7 recovery facility’ means a dedicated facility
8 where primarily residential recyclable materials,
9 which are diverted from disposal by the gener-
10 ator and collected separately from municipal
11 solid waste, are mechanically or manually sort-
12 ed into commodities for further processing into
13 specification-grade commodities for sale to end
14 users.

15 “(B) EXCLUSION.—The term ‘materials
16 recovery facility’ does not include a solid waste
17 management facility that may process munic-
18 ipal solid waste to remove recyclable materials.

19 “(C) DEFINITION OF PROCESSING.—For
20 purposes of this paragraph, the term ‘proc-
21 essing’ has the meaning given the term in sec-
22 tion 3(a)(2) of the Strategies To Eliminate
23 Waste and Accelerate Recycling Development
24 Act of 2025.

25 “(b) REPORT.—

1 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall re-
2 quest information and data from, collaborate with,
3 or contract with, as necessary and appropriate,
4 States, units of local government, and Indian Tribes,
5 for the provision, preparation, and publication of a
6 report, or to expand work under the National Recy-
7 cling Strategy to include information and data, on
8 compostable materials and efforts to reduce contami-
9 nation rates for recycling, including—

10 “(A) an evaluation of existing Federal,
11 State, and local laws that may present barriers
12 to implementation of composting strategies;

13 “(B) a description and evaluation of
14 composting infrastructure and programs within
15 States, units of local government, and Indian
16 Tribes;

17 “(C) an estimate of the costs and approxi-
18 mate land needed to expand composting pro-
19 grams; and

20 “(D) a review of the practices of manufac-
21 turers and companies that are moving to using
22 compostable packaging and food service ware
23 for the purpose of making the composting proc-
24 ess the end-of-life use of those products.

1 “(2) SUBMISSION.—Not later than 2 years
2 after the date of enactment of this section, the Ad-
3 ministrator shall submit to Congress the report pre-
4 pared under paragraph (1).

5 “(c) INVENTORY OF MATERIALS RECOVERY FACILI-
6 TIES.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment
7 of this section, and every 4 years thereafter, the Adminis-
8 trator, in consultation with relevant Federal agencies and
9 States, units of local government, and Indian Tribes,
10 shall—

11 “(1) prepare an inventory or estimate of mate-
12 rials recovery facilities in the United States, includ-
13 ing—

14 “(A) the number of materials recovery fa-
15 cilities in each State; and

16 “(B) a general description of the materials
17 that each of those materials recovery facilities
18 can process, including—

19 “(i) in the case of plastic, a descrip-
20 tion of—

21 “(I) the types of accepted resin,
22 if applicable; and

23 “(II) the packaging or product
24 format, such as a jug, a carton, or
25 film;

1 “(ii) food packaging and service ware,
2 such as a bottle, cutlery, or a cup;

3 “(iii) paper;

4 “(iv) aluminum, such as an aluminum
5 beverage can, food can, aerosol can, or foil;

6 “(v) steel, such as a steel food or aer-
7 osol can;

8 “(vi) other scrap metal;

9 “(vii) glass; or

10 “(viii) any other material not de-
11 scribed in any of clauses (i) through (vii)
12 that a materials recovery facility processes;
13 and

14 “(2) submit to Congress the inventory or esti-
15 mate prepared under paragraph (1).

16 “(d) INFORMATION ON RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING
17 SYSTEMS.—The Administrator shall, as necessary and ap-
18 propriate, collaborate or contract with States, units of
19 local government, and Indian Tribes to estimate, with re-
20 spect to the United States—

21 “(1) the number and types of recycling and
22 composting programs;

23 “(2) the types and forms of materials accepted
24 by recycling or composting programs;

25 “(3) the number of individuals—

1 “(A) with access to recycling and
2 composting services to at least the extent of ac-
3 cess to disposal services; and

4 “(B) who use, on a percentage basis, the
5 recycling and composting services described in
6 subparagraph (A);

7 “(4) the number of individuals with barriers to
8 accessing recycling and composting services similar
9 to their access to disposal services and the types of
10 those barriers experienced;

11 “(5) the inbound contamination and capture
12 rates of recycling and composting programs;

13 “(6) if applicable, other available recycling or
14 composting programs; and

15 “(7) the average costs and benefits to States,
16 units of local government, and Indian Tribes of recy-
17 cling and composting programs.

18 “(e) RECYCLING REPORTING RATES.—

19 “(1) COLLECTION OF DATA; DEVELOPMENT OF
20 RATES.—The Administrator may use amounts made
21 available under section 3(e) of the Strategies To
22 Eliminate Waste and Accelerate Recycling Develop-
23 ment Act of 2025—

24 “(A) to biannually collect, in collaboration
25 with States, to the extent practicable, informa-

1 tion supplied on a voluntary basis to develop
2 the estimated rates described in subparagraphs
3 (B) and (C);

4 “(B) to develop a standardized estimated
5 rate of recyclable materials in States that pro-
6 vide information under subparagraph (A) that
7 have been successfully diverted from the waste
8 stream and brought to a materials recovery fa-
9 cility or composting facility; and

10 “(C) to develop an estimated national recy-
11 cling rate based on the information described in
12 subparagraphs (A) and (B).

13 “(2) USE.—Using amounts made available
14 under section 3(e) of the Strategies To Eliminate
15 Waste and Accelerate Recycling Development Act of
16 2025, the Administrator may use the information
17 collected and rates developed under paragraph (1) to
18 provide requesting States, units of local government,
19 and Indian Tribes data and technical assistance—

20 “(A) to reduce the overall waste produced
21 by the States, units of local government, and
22 Indian Tribes;

23 “(B) to assist the States, units of local
24 government, and Indian Tribes in under-

1 standing the nuances of the information col-
2 lected relating to diversion activities; and

3 “(C) to increase recycling and composting
4 rates of the States, units of local government,
5 and Indian Tribes.

6 “(f) REPORT ON END MARKETS.—The Adminis-
7 trator, in collaboration or contract with, as necessary and
8 appropriate, relevant Federal agencies, States, units of
9 local government, or Indian Tribes, shall—

10 “(1) provide an update to the report submitted
11 under section 306 of the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act
12 (Public Law 116–224; 134 Stat. 1096) to include an
13 addendum on the end-market sale of all recyclable
14 materials from materials recovery facilities that
15 process recyclable materials, including, to the extent
16 practicable—

17 “(A) the total, in dollars per ton, domestic
18 sales of bales of recyclable materials; and

19 “(B) the total, in dollars per ton, inter-
20 national sales of bales of recyclable materials;

21 “(2) prepare a report on the end-market sale of
22 compost from, to the extent practicable, compostable
23 materials, including the total, in dollars per ton, of
24 domestic sales of compostable materials; and

1 “(3) not later than 3 years after the date of en-
2 actment of this section, submit to Congress the up-
3 date to the report prepared under paragraph (1) and
4 the report prepared under paragraph (2).

5 “(g) PRIVILEGED OR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMA-
6 TION.—

7 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Information collected under
8 subsection (e)(1) or paragraph (1) or (2) of sub-
9 section (f) shall not include any privileged or con-
10 fidential information described in section 552(b)(4)
11 of title 5, United States Code.

12 “(2) NONDISCLOSURE.—Information collected
13 to carry out this section shall not be made public if
14 the information meets the requirements of section
15 552(b) of title 5, United States Code.”.

16 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of con-
17 tents in section 1001 of the Solid Waste Disposal
18 Act (Public Law 89–272; 90 Stat. 2795; 98 Stat.
19 3268) is amended by inserting after the item relat-
20 ing to section 4010 the following:

“Sec. 4011. Report on composting and recycling infrastructure capabilities.”.

21 (c) FEDERAL AGENCY ACTIVITIES RELATED TO RE-
22 CYCLING.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enact-
23 ment of this Act, and every 2 years thereafter until 2033,
24 the Comptroller General of the United States shall make
25 publicly available a report—

1 (1) detailing or, to the extent practicable, pro-
2 viding an estimate of—

3 (A) the total annual recycling and
4 composting rates reported by all Federal agen-
5 cies; and

6 (B) the total annual percentage of prod-
7 ucts containing recyclable material, compostable
8 material, or recovered materials purchased by
9 all Federal agencies, including—

10 (i) the total quantity of procured
11 products containing recyclable material or
12 recovered materials listed in the com-
13 prehensive procurement guidelines pub-
14 lished under section 6002(e) of the Solid
15 Waste Disposal Act (42 U.S.C. 6962(e));
16 and

17 (ii) the total quantity of compostable
18 material purchased by all Federal agencies;

19 (2) identifying the activities of each Federal
20 agency that promote recycling or composting; and

21 (3) identifying activities that Federal agencies
22 could carry out to further promote recycling or
23 composting.

24 (d) STUDY ON THE DIVERSION OF RECYCLABLE MA-
25 TERIALS FROM A CIRCULAR MARKET.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after
2 the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator
3 shall develop a metric for determining the proportion
4 of recyclable materials in commercial and municipal
5 waste streams that are being diverted from a cir-
6 cular market.

7 (2) STUDY; REPORT.—Not later than 1 year
8 after the development of a metric under paragraph
9 (1), the Administrator shall conduct a study of, and
10 submit to Congress a report on, the proportion of re-
11 cyclable materials in commercial and municipal
12 waste streams that, during each of the 10 calendar
13 years preceding the year of submission of the report,
14 were diverted from a circular market.

15 (3) DATA.—The report under paragraph (2)
16 shall provide data on specific recyclable materials,
17 including aluminum, plastics, paper and paperboard,
18 textiles, and glass, that were prevented from remain-
19 ing in a circular market through disposal or elimi-
20 nation, and to what use those specific recyclable ma-
21 terials were lost.

22 (4) EVALUATION.—The report under paragraph
23 (2) shall include an evaluation of whether the estab-
24 lishment or improvement of recycling programs
25 would—

- 1 (A) improve recycling rates;
- 2 (B) reduce the quantity of recyclable mate-
- 3 rials being unutilized in a circular market; and
- 4 (C) affect prices paid by consumers for
- 5 products using materials recycled in the circular
- 6 market.

7 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is

8 authorized to be appropriated to the Administrator to

9 carry out this section and the amendments made by this

10 section \$4,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 through

11 2029.

12 (f) ADMINISTRATION.—

13 (1) UNFUNDED MANDATES.—The Adminis-

14 trator or the Secretary of Commerce may not exer-

15 cise any authority under this section or any amend-

16 ment made by this section if exercising that author-

17 ity would require a State, a unit of local govern-

18 ment, or an Indian Tribe to carry out a mandate for

19 which funding is not available.

20 (2) NONDISCLOSURE.—Any information col-

21 lected to carry out this section shall not be made

1 public if the information meets the requirements of
2 section 552(b) of title 5, United States Code.

Passed the Senate November 20, 2025.

Attest:

Secretary.

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1ST SESSION

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AN ACT

To establish a pilot grant program to improve recycling accessibility, to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to carry out certain activities to collect and disseminate data on recycling and composting programs in the United States, and for other purposes.