



*Via Electronic Delivery*

June 23, 2026

The Honorable Brett Guthrie  
Chair, House Energy & Commerce Committee  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Ranking Member, House Energy & Commerce  
Committee  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Gary Palmer  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Environment  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Paul Tonko  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Environment  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone, Chairman Palmer, and Ranking Member Tonko,

The Recycled Materials Association (ReMA) – the leading organization dedicated to promoting safe, economically sustainable, and environmentally responsible recycling through education, networking, and advocacy – would like to commend the House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Environment Subcommittee for its desire to examine how to support critical mineral recovery and recycling at the upcoming hearing, *Trash to Treasure: Examining Legislation to Support Domestic Critical Mineral Recovery and Recycling*.

### **Overview of the Recycled Materials Industry**

ReMA represents more than 1,700 companies that play a critical role in supplying recycled materials to America's manufacturing supply chain. ReMA members collect, process, broker, and consume end-of-life materials – including metals, such as steel, copper, nickel, and aluminum, as well as paper, plastics, glass, textiles, rubber, electronics, and batteries – derived from diverse commercial, industrial, and residential sources across the country. ReMA is also the largest trade association representing predominantly small- and medium-sized recycling companies that operate over 4,000 locations across the U.S. and the world.

The recycled materials industry is integral to the U.S. economy, transforming surplus and end-of-life materials into essential components of daily life and providing high-quality renewable resources for everything from national infrastructure to consumer products. The roads we drive on and the cars we drive in, the rebar that strengthens our buildings, the wires that bring electricity and communications into our homes and offices, and the boxes that bring consumer goods and food to our homes are all made with recycled materials. In 2025 alone, the recycled materials industry produced nearly \$183 billion in economic impact and supported over 600,000 direct and indirect



jobs across the nation.<sup>1</sup> That economic footprint is also a supply chain asset, particularly as Congress evaluates how to increase domestic access to critical minerals and other strategic materials.

Through continuous innovation and efficiency improvements, in 2024 the U.S. recycled materials industry processed 135 million metric tons of recycled materials, including 65 million tons of recycled iron and steel, nearly 42 million tons of recovered paper and fiber, 9 million tons of nonferrous metals, and just under 6 million tons of recycled and reused electronics. More than 75 percent of all recycled material processed in the United States is consumed by domestic manufacturers to produce everything from steel beams to cardboard boxes, vehicles and batteries, household appliances, cell phones, computers, and electronics.

In other words, recycled materials are not theoretical supply chain inputs; they are already embedded in American manufacturing and represent a ready-made solution to supply chain vulnerabilities.

### **Recycling Is a Domestic Source of Critical Minerals**

Recycling is a proven domestic supplier of critical minerals and other essential manufacturing inputs. Understanding how recycled materials are generated, processed, and marketed is therefore essential to evaluating policies affecting critical mineral supply chains. Recyclers collect, sort, and process complex, end-of-life products – including vehicles, appliances, and other durable goods – that yield multiple recycled material streams. Those streams may include critical minerals such as copper, nickel, cobalt, manganese, aluminum, and rare earth elements, as well as other essential but non-critical materials, such as steel and plastics. Because critical minerals are often recovered alongside other recycled materials, policies intended to strengthen critical mineral supply chains must also consider how those policies affect the broader recycling ecosystem.

Our nation's recyclers have become increasingly sophisticated at dismantling devices, safely removing batteries, processing electronics and recovering their valuable materials – including precious metals and rare earth elements – alongside base metals, plastics, and other recyclable materials. As demand for critical minerals rises, metals, electronics, battery, and other specialty recyclers should be recognized as strategic partners in strengthening domestic supply chains, growing manufacturing, and reducing reliance on foreign sources of critical feedstock.

Federal policy should focus on removing barriers to recycling and creating incentives that expand domestic collection, sorting, refining, separation, processing, and consumption capacity. This includes support for infrastructure investment, practical permitting pathways, safe transportation and storage rules, and policies that help support end markets for recovered materials.

### **Battery Recycling: Securing Material for the Future**

End-of-life batteries are one of the clearest examples of how recycling can strengthen critical mineral supply chains. As demand for new lithium-ion batteries is projected to grow more than five-fold globally and more than six-fold in the United States by 2030, the batteries already in circulation today will become an increasingly important domestic source of recoverable lithium, nickel, cobalt, manganese, and other valuable materials.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Recycled Materials Association, 2025 ReMA Yearbook (2025), [https://www.recycledmaterials.org/wp-content/uploads/9820-ReMA-Yearbook\\_2025\\_V7\\_FINAL\\_Digital.pdf](https://www.recycledmaterials.org/wp-content/uploads/9820-ReMA-Yearbook_2025_V7_FINAL_Digital.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Li-Bridge, *Building a Robust and Resilient U.S. Lithium Battery Supply Chain* (Argonne National Laboratory, February 2023) [https://www.anl.gov/sites/www/files/2023-02/Li-Bridge%20Industry%20Report\\_0.pdf](https://www.anl.gov/sites/www/files/2023-02/Li-Bridge%20Industry%20Report_0.pdf)



For example, producing one ton of battery-grade lithium requires roughly 750 tons of brine or 250 tons of ore – compared to only 28 tons of spent lithium-ion batteries. For cobalt, producing one ton of battery-grade material requires 300 tons of ore but only 5 to 15 tons of spent batteries.<sup>3</sup> Meeting the demand for tomorrow’s power grid, vehicles, and consumer goods will depend in part on materials already present in today’s batteries, laptops, cell phones, and vehicles.

Based on research conducted by ReMA in 2024, over the next ten years the volume of batteries available for recycling is projected to triple, exceeding 700,000 tons and 962 million units per year in 2034. Of these, 845 million of those batteries will be small, loose batteries or batteries in small electronic devices, while another 84 million will be found embedded in devices. While small batteries will represent the overwhelming majority of units, large-format batteries – particularly those from electric vehicles and e-mobility devices – will account for most of the weight. This distribution presents distinct collection, safety, transport, and processing challenges across battery categories.

Battery recycling is already helping to secure a domestic supply chain for critical minerals such as lithium, nickel, cobalt, and manganese. As battery volumes grow, the opportunity is not whether recycling can contribute to domestic supply chains, but how federal policy can help scale that recovery safely, efficiently, and economically. When batteries and battery containing products reach proper recycling streams, they can be transformed into valuable inputs for domestic manufacturing, but when they do not, they become risks to the public, to first responders, and to recycling employees and infrastructure. Policymakers can play a constructive role by supporting consumer education, bolstering safe collection infrastructure, guiding responsible product design with end-of-life in mind, providing clear transportation and handling standards, and supporting domestic processing capacity – all while advancing battery safety, mitigating fire and environmental risks, and ensuring responsible end-of-life management.

On behalf of ReMA’s members, who strengthen U.S. manufacturing supply chains by supplying high-quality recycled materials, I thank you again for your leadership and continued work on this important issue. We stand ready to support the Subcommittee’s efforts to bolster critical mineral recycling and welcome additional dialogue and opportunities to discuss these comments further. To continue that dialogue, do not hesitate to reach out to me at [khildreth@recycledmaterials.org](mailto:khildreth@recycledmaterials.org).

Sincerely,

Kristen Hildreth  
VP, Government Relations and Public Policy  
Recycled Materials Association

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<sup>3</sup> Federal Consortium for Advanced Batteries, *National Blueprint for Lithium Batteries 2021–2030* (June 2021), [https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2021-06/FCAB%20National%20Blueprint%20Lithium%20Batteries%200621\\_0\\_0.pdf](https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2021-06/FCAB%20National%20Blueprint%20Lithium%20Batteries%200621_0_0.pdf)