

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 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).

(7) RECYCLABLE MATERIAL.—The term “recyclable material” means a material that is obsolete, previously used, off-specification, surplus, or incidentally produced for processing into a specification-grade commodity for which a reuse market currently exists or is being developed.

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

(A) receives and consolidates recyclable material from curbside recycling or drop-off facilities; and

(B) loads the recyclable material onto tractor trailers, railcars, or barges for transport to a distant materials recovery facility or another recycling-related facility.

(9) UNDERSERVED COMMUNITY.—The term “underserved community” means a community, including an unincorporated area, without access to full recycling services because—

(A) transportation, distance, or other reasons render utilization of available processing capacity at an existing materials recovery facility cost prohibitive; or

(B) the processing capacity of an existing 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—

(A) for administrative costs relating to carrying out the pilot grant program; and

(B) to provide technical assistance to eligible entities applying for a grant under the pilot 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 “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

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

14 (i) is manufactured through the controlled aerobic, biological decomposition of biodegradable materials;

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

19 (I) significantly reduce the viability of pathogens and weed seeds; and

21 (II) stabilize carbon in the product such that the product is beneficial 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 recycla-  
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-

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

“(B) to develop a standardized estimated rate of recyclable materials in States that provide information under subparagraph (A) that have been successfully diverted from the waste stream and brought to a materials recovery facility or composting facility; and

“(C) to develop an estimated national recycling rate based on the information described in subparagraphs (A) and (B).

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

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

“(B) to assist the States, units of local 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) detailing or, to the extent practicable, providing an estimate of—

(A) the total annual recycling and composting rates reported by all Federal agencies; and

(B) the total annual percentage of products containing recyclable material, compostable material, or recovered materials purchased by all Federal agencies, including—

(i) the total quantity of procured products containing recyclable material or recovered materials listed in the comprehensive procurement guidelines published under section 6002(e) of the Solid Waste Disposal Act (42 U.S.C. 6962(e)); and

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

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

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

(d) STUDY ON THE DIVERSION OF RECYCLABLE MATERIALS 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.*



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.