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Committee on Environment  
and Public Works

Washington, D.C.

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FEDERAL PROGRAMS FOR THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY: STATE AND LOCAL  
PERSPECTIVES ON EFFORTS TO IMPROVE REUSE AND RECYCLING

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The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:25 a.m. in room 406, Dirksen Senate Office Building, the Honorable Thomas R. Carper [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Senators Carper, Capito, Boozman, Sullivan.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE THOMAS R. CARPER, A UNITED STATES  
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF DELAWARE

Senator Carper. Good morning, again, for those who have been with us for the first part of this. I said to Senator Capito, this is a little bit like a day-night double-hitter, except we get to do it all in the daytime.

I want to welcome everyone to this second half of our workload today. I am pleased to call the hearing to order.

Today, we are gathered to talk about one of my favorite subjects, and I think a favorite subject of many members of our committee, and that is recycling. Specifically, today we are here to discuss a topic that we have explored any number of times before this committee, and that is circular economy.

First, I want to welcome our witnesses to the committee today: Secretary Bizer, Ms. Fife-Ferris, and Mr. Marshall. There is a college in West Virginia named after you, the Thundering Herd, where my sister actually went to college. We thank you all for joining us this morning.

What exactly is a circular economy, anyway? As you will recall, the circular economy is a model of production and consumption to which things we use during our daily lives are reused, repaired, or recycled instead of allowing those items to end up in a landfill or to litter our communities across America.

As a number of our colleagues know, I care deeply about limiting waste through recycling and reusing. In fact, I have recycled just about everything from paint cans to electronics.

I like to run. I like to run outside a couple days a week, and as I run along, if I come across beer cans or bottles or whatever, I pick them up. People sometimes wonder what I am doing, but I just like to pick them up and recycle them when I get home. I am too old to change.

One might ask, why is it important that we build a circular economy? Well, reusing and recycling products not only helps keep our communities cleaner, but it is an essential part of the solution to a series of crises facing our planet. These include escalating climate change, overflowing landfills, and alarming amounts of plastic choking our oceans.

For example, recycling can reduce energy consumption. Producing aluminum products from recycled materials uses 95 percent less energy than creating them from first-use materials, and it is not just aluminum. Many goods, like paper and glass, are more energy-efficient to produce from recycled materials. With more energy-efficient processes, manufacturers reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

Further, reducing waste from the products we use has significant economic benefits. For example, in 2020, the Environmental Protection Agency's Recycling Economic Information

Report estimated that recycling and reuse activities support approximately 681,000 domestic jobs. How many jobs is that? Just for comparison's sake, that is more jobs than the entire workforce of the State of Rhode Island.

Unfortunately, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, today, we only recycle approximately 32 percent of our waste in the United States. That presents us with both a challenge and an opportunity. In adversity lies opportunity.

As many of our colleagues know, that is something I believe in deeply, and I think my colleagues do, as well. I believe we have an opportunity to clean up our communities, an opportunity to support jobs and economic growth, and protect our planet by actively supporting recycling and reuse as ways to reduce waste in our economy.

Fortunately, we have taken bipartisan action in recent years to seize the day and seize the opportunity. In the 116th Congress, as some of you may recall, members of this committee worked together to lead the passage of the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act. That law established the Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling, or SWIFR, grant program at the Environmental Protection Agency to support waste management programs across our Country.

As some of you will recall, last Congress, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which Senator Capito and I helped to write,

we literally worked on it in this committee hearing room and beyond with the Administration, but last Congress, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provided funding for this grant program. Specifically, this historic law provides \$275 million over five years for the SWIFR program and some \$75 million over five years for recycling education and outreach grants.

EPA announced awards for the SWIFR grant program in November of last year, representing the largest Federal investment in recycling in over 30 years. Every single State has been awarded funding through that program.

SWIFR grants are flexible and can be used for many different purposes. For example, in Delaware, we will use part of our funding to conduct research on using recycling glass as a, this is very unique, I think this is very cool stuff, using recycled glass as a cost-effective alternative to sand for beach replenishment. The city of Baltimore, Maryland, where Ben Cardin is from, will use its SWIFR grant to build a solar-powered composting facility, and the State of Arkansas will use its funding to update its statewide waste management plan for the 21st century.

Today, we will hear more about how the city of Seattle, Washington is using its SWIFR grant to build a warehouse to help reuse salvaged lumber from old buildings. If more cities found ways to reuse building materials, as Seattle is doing, we could

create approximately 200,000 jobs. Let me say that again: if more cities found ways to reuse building materials as Seattle is doing, we could create approximately 200,000 jobs and reduce carbon emissions associated with building materials by almost 40 percent by the year 2050, according to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's estimates.

Today, we are looking forward to learning more from our panelists about what is working in communities across our Nation. As the members of this committee have often heard me say more than a few times, we need to find out what works and do more of that.

As members of this committee will recall, in the Senate, we are continuing to advance bipartisan solutions that will support the innovative work happening on the ground in communities across America. Ranking Member Senator Capito, along with Senator Boozman and yours truly, authored two recycling bills to improve data collection on our Nation's recycling and composting systems and to expand recycling infrastructure in rural communities. In fact, these bills just passed the Senate about two months ago, back in March.

In closing, I believe that we should seize the opportunity in front of us to create a circular economy that protects our planet, strengthens our communities, and creates jobs. We must do so by collaborating across all levels of government. That

includes nonprofits, and it includes the private sector, which we will hear from a lot here today.

Before we turn to our panel of witnesses, I want to turn it over to Senator Capito and thank her for her terrific leadership on these issues, not just for West Virginia, but for our Country.

Senator Capito?

[The prepared statement of Senator Carper follows:]



STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, A UNITED STATES  
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

Senator Capito. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the panel for being here with us today. We are going to revisit a topic that we have talked about a lot in the committee: the benefits of recycling and policy options to improve our recycling infrastructure.

After hearing about specific recycling challenges, Chairman Carper and I introduced and shepherded through the Senate the two bills that the Chairman talked about. These two bills, the Chairman's bill is the Recycling Composting and Accountability Act, and my bill is the Recycling Infrastructure and Accessibility Act.

They both await action in the House, and for the life of me, I cannot believe that we can't get these bills over the finish line. We have been trying for, like, three years, and they are quite simple and just a very beginning step, but we are going to keep trying, and we are going to push this and try to get into law. Maybe if I named it after you, maybe we would have better luck.

Senator Carper. No, no, we are trying to get them passed.

[Laughter.]

Senator Capito. We are also committed to an ongoing evaluation by the Committee of the capacity of our Nation's

recycling systems to handle increasing amounts of waste.

A fundamental challenge is how to improve the recycling collection infrastructure across the Nation in the face of low demand for recycled materials. In examining that challenge, we should consider what, if any, additional role there is for government, or at what level.

The Federal Government's role should reflect the well-established spirit of cooperative federalism that the regulation of waste management is based upon. Federal policy solutions should supplement, not replace or override, State, local, and private initiatives and programs.

One area to consider is whether more clarity is needed for recycling labeling to provide better information to households. Recycling information should be easy to understand and in line with today's recycling infrastructure.

The three chasing arrows label that we are accustomed to seeing on consumer products is outdated and actively misleads consumers. The average consumer should not need a microscope to decipher the fine print on a label to see if something is recyclable in their community.

The lack of consistent and clear labeling on everyday products is due to great variation in existing infrastructure and local recycling requirements across the Country. That is why the pizza box can be recycled here in D.C., but it goes

straight into the trash when I am at home.

Today's hearing is focused on the role of Federal programs to support local waste management efforts. As we will hear today, Federal grants alone are not a magic bullet solution, but they are one tool that can help spur private sector investment to build that collection infrastructure. Grant recipients can leverage that funding into zero-interest or below-market rate loans. This helps to reduce risk and attract private sector investments into emerging technologies and infrastructure.

Competitive grants are also inherently flexible funding mechanisms. This is particularly impactful within the recycling sector, as grants can be tailored to the unique needs of a particular recycling facility or community.

As we consider the potential role that Federal Government may fill in our recycling infrastructure, I do have two key areas of concern.

First, competitive grant programs are frequently accompanied by rigorous and complex application requirements. The short timeframes and complicated requirements can disadvantage rural communities that are unable to compete with large urban centers due to a lack of resources. The lack of rural recycling infrastructure is one of the key challenges, I think, facing our recycling system. We must address rural participation in our competitive grant programs.

Secondly, the U.S. recycling system will never be sustainable if there is an overreliance on Federal grant funding. Grants should be used to attract and not replace private sector investment into recycling infrastructure.

Recycling systems operate on the premise that materials can be recovered, reprocessed, and then resold to consumers. Without viable end markets with consumers willing to pay for recyclable goods, those recycling systems will collapse, and we have seen that, sort of, in the past, regardless of how much taxpayer dollars are thrown into this.

So, I look forward to hearing from our panel today. With that, I yield back my time.

[The prepared statement of Senator Capito follows:]

Senator Carper. Thanks so much. I am going to turn now to our panel of witnesses. On behalf of all the members of this committee, thank you for joining us today to share your perspectives on Federal programs on the circular economy. Thank you even more for the good that you do with your lives for our States and our Country and for our planet.

First, we are going to hear from Secretary Elizabeth Biser, who is currently Secretary of North Carolina's Department of Environmental Quality. Who was your predecessor in that role?

Ms. Biser. Administrator Michael Regan.

Senator Carper. No kidding. Do you ever talk to him?

Ms. Biser. I do.

Senator Carper. Good, all right. My wife is from North Carolina. She is from Boone, up in the mountains. I told her that we are having the Secretary from North Carolina come, and she said to tell you hello, and go get them, girl.

Secretary Biser was appointed by an old friend, Roy Cooper, the Governor of North Carolina in, what was it, 2021? Yes. Secretary Biser joined us, I think it was in 2021, to share some of her thoughts on the circular economy concept. We look forward to hearing from you again today about how circularity has changed in the past two and half years, and it has changed.

Next, we are joined by Susan Fife-Ferris, who serves as the Director of Solid Waste Planning and Program Management for

Seattle Public Utilities. In her role, Ms. Fife, you go by Ms. Fife-Ferris, is that right?

Ms. Fife-Ferris. Yes.

Senator Carper. There you go, okay. F-squared, there we go. She leads the city's solid waste management division, focusing on strategic and long-range planning. Welcome.

Lastly, we are going to hear from Cody Marshall, who is the Chief System Optimization Officer for the Recycling Partnership. Mr. Marshall leads the Recycling Partnership's efforts to provide grants and resources to local and State recycling programs across our Nation.

We thank you all for coming before our committee today. We are grateful to you for joining us to discuss this important topic. We will now begin witness testimony. I am going to ask Secretary Biser to be our lead-off hitter. Proceed with your statement at this time, thank you.

Senator Boozman is about to -- I think he has, John? Senator Boozman? Before you, I just want us to take a minute. He is a great partner in this, a great leader on this front, not just for his State, but for our Country. I just want to say, what a joy and honor it is to work with you, especially on these issues.

Senator Boozman. Let me just say likewise to you and Shelley for working so hard, and then again, the key to it all

has been our staff. They work really hard and do a great job together. As you pointed out earlier in the business meeting, I mean, this is how this place ought to work, again, not only between us, but between our staffs working really hard. So, thank you all for being here, and we appreciate all you do very, very much.

Senator Carper. Thank you, sir. There is a great song, "She Works Hard for the Money," and our staff work really hard for the money, as you know. We are grateful for that. All right. Thank you.

Ms. Biser, why don't you go ahead and jump into it?

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ELIZABETH BISER, SECRETARY, NORTH  
CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Ms. Biser. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Capito, members of the committee. I really appreciate the opportunity to come back today to talk about the circular economy in North Carolina and specifically how I have utilized efforts and investment under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to further our recycling efforts.

These investments, Mr. Chairman, as you noted, mark the most significant Federal investments in recycling in decades to States. As we are seeing through the fact that every single State and territory in the district all opted into the Solid Waste Infrastructure and Recycling Grant Program, the SWIFR Program, we see that this is a universal issue across States.

As a president of the Environmental Council of States, I can tell you that sustainable material management is one of --

Senator Carper. So you are also the president as well? That is a lot of titles.

Ms. Biser. Lots of titles. Some of them, it is on the minds of a lot of my colleagues. One of the things that we are focused on this year in our organizational parties is advancing the circular economy.

Today, I will talk to you a little bit about how North Carolina is using investments from the IIJA to advance our



circular economy, how building State capacity for recycling is so vital to addressing the needs of our infrastructure, developing end markets, and making sure that we are furthering resident education.

In North Carolina, we like to say a healthy economy and a healthy environment go hand in hand. In order to make that a reality, we need a firm foundation of good data on which to make smart and strategic investments. The majority of SWIFR funding to States is going towards data collection efforts and development of solid waste management plans, in some cases, for the very first time in other States.

At North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, we are using the approximately \$600,000 that we received to conduct a statewide materials management optimization study. That will include a statewide waste characterization study, market assessments for key commodities, a gap analysis for material recovery facilities, and a recycling hub-and-spoke infrastructure assessment to address recycling in the rural parts of our State.

The State is going to enable us to make smart and strategic decisions about where to invest resources where we can get the maximum return on investment. This is critical because the conversation is different than it was when I was last here to talk about this issue in 2021.

States like mine have not traditionally been worried about landfill capacity issues. We have been talking about this more in terms of job and economic investment, but now we are starting to see the conversation evolve. In North Carolina, our two largest regional landfills, which together, accept about 25 percent of our State's waste, are approaching capacity within the next decade. This comes at a time --

Senator Carper. Where are those located?

Ms. Biser. They are in Charlotte and in the Southeastern part of our State.

Senator Carper. Okay, thanks.

Ms. Biser. This comes at a time when our State is growing very rapidly, so boosting our recycling efforts is going to ensure that that end-of-life material, that is actually feeding our economy, creating jobs, economic investment, and creating manufacturing feedstock for local industries that desperately need it.

In fact, more than 15,700 North Carolinians are directly employed by the 550 recycling businesses in our State. As we continue to make investments, we anticipate we will see those numbers continue to grow.

We are also making investments in education and outreach. We know that there is a significant amount of contamination in the waste stream due to wish-cycling, or residents putting

materials in their bins that don't belong there, and that results in contamination issues that increase costs for local governments and make the sortation and processing recyclables more difficult.

North Carolina is also using SWIFR funding to advance our Recycle Right and our Use the Food NC materials management campaigns. These two campaigns advance the goals of reducing the amount of contamination in the recycling stream and also reducing the amount of wasted food going into our landfills. We are also providing grants to local governments to help them with their education and outreach efforts, as well.

One way we know that we can reduce confusion about what they can recycle where, Senator Capito, you mentioned the pizza box example, is to invest in MRF infrastructure. Accepted materials vary across jurisdictions because the level of modernization and what materials different MRFs can accept vary across jurisdictions, and so the information that we gather through our SWIFR-funded study will help us identify where there are gaps in the MRF processing infrastructure and where modernization efforts can improve the quantity and the quality of materials that are recycled.

While we tend to think about the traditional recyclables of our plastic bottles, our aluminum cans, cardboard, we also need to think about the infrastructure to handle waste and food,

which composes nearly a quarter of the waste stream. the climate footprint of wasted food is large. In fact, a recent EPA study showed that wasted food is responsible for nearly 60 percent of methane emissions from solid waste landfills.

Senator Carper. Would you say that again?

Ms. Biser. So, the EPA study found that wasted food is responsible for nearly 60 percent of methane emissions from solid waste landfills. It is a staggering number.

Senator Carper. Thank you.

Ms. Biser. At the same time, we have more than 44 million Americans that live in food insecure households who could very much benefit from the food that is still edible that makes its way to landfills.

My agency in 2022 did a study to see what our composting capacity was versus how much food we are generating. We found that we generate nearly 2.5 million tons of food waste per year, while our capacity for commercial composters in the State can only handle 350 tons, so that leaves a 2.1 million ton gap.

We know that investments in composting infrastructure are an example of how States can encourage end market development, generate jobs, and leverage private economic investment and mitigate waste by turning that potential waste product into a commodity.

We also provide data and information to manufacturers who

are considering locating to our State to help them look at where material is being generated, and those investments also help protect our environment and grow our economy.

I will emphasize again that we cannot pursue these actions without sufficient State capacity and resources. We know that recycling is an inherently local activity, and having the State capacity be robust and have that information and data we need to help our local governments is key to helping advance the circular economy.

I encourage Congress and this committee to continue to invest in recycling, to build State capacity, and to support the infrastructure, education, and end markets needed to move towards a true circular economy. Everyone, whether we are in North Carolina or across the Country, is thinking about how we can more sustainably manage our materials. There is no better example of a healthy environment and a healthy economy going hand-in-hand.

I am grateful for the opportunity today to share my State's perspective, and I greatly appreciate this committee's support, and especially Senator Capito and Senator Carper, your support of this issue. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Biser follows:]

Senator Carper. Thank you so much. Thanks for joining us again in this room. Thank you for your testimony today.

Now, we are going to turn to Ms. Fife-Ferris to hear her testimony. Welcome. Good to see you today. Thanks for joining us. Please proceed.

STATEMENT OF SUSAN FIFE-FERRIS, DIRECTOR, SOLID WASTE PLANNING  
AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT DIVISION, SEATTLE PUBLIC UTILITIES

Ms. Fife-Ferris. Good morning. Good morning, Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, and members of the committee. My name is Susan Fife-Ferris, and I am Director of Solid Waste Planning Management for Seattle Public Utilities. Thank you for inviting me today to testify.

Seattle has been an international leader in the solid waste management for decades, including waste prevention, recycling, and composting organic materials. Our vision is zero waste. We owe our success to strong public and private support focused on protecting and improving community and environmental health.

Our city still faces challenges and has limited control or influence over the large and complex solid waste system. This is why leadership at the national level is so important to help eliminate waste and create a truly circular economy. Funding for the Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling, or SWIFR, grant program included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act has been critical for important reuse and recycling strategies and projects throughout our Nation.

Seattle is a fortunate recipient of one of these grants, which will allow us to establish a salvage lumber warehouse to support our local deconstruction sector in salvaging lumber that can be reclaimed and reused from old buildings. The SWIFR grant

will provide seed money necessary to attract a private company to site a salvaged lumber warehouse to ensure that recovered lumber can be stored, marketed, and sold. This funding will help fill a critical gap in the infrastructure and lay the foundation for sustained preservation of the precious resource that this lumber represents.

We strongly encourage the Senate to extend the SWIFR funding, as well as other funding mechanisms, such as the Consumer Recycling Education and Outreach grant program beyond the 2026 end date.

The Federal Government can also play a critical role by supporting consistent and accurate data collection at a national level and using this data to drive effective programs and investments in the solid waste field. Seattle has collected data and used data to inform our management of solid waste for over 30 years, and we know how important and foundational it is.

Therefore, we support passage of the Chairman's legislation, the Recycling and Compost Accountability Act. That is a great start for providing the support needed for data collection and analysis nationwide.

The Ranking Member's legislation, the Recycling Infrastructure and Accessibility Act, would also be an important step forward to help increase collection of recyclables by making recycling more convenient and accessible. Many



communities throughout the Country don't have access to basic recycling, resulting in valuable materials going into a landfill. I hope the committee will move both bills forward.

Our Reuse Seattle Initiative is an example of where a government entity can play a role in developing a circular economy and facilitating the reduction and eventual elimination of single-use plastic products and packaging in the food service industry.

The Federal Government can play a role by supporting the development of standards and providing local governments funds to invest in reuse systems and infrastructure. Federal investments can provide the seeds that help grow the reuse ecosystem.

Additionally, we support the Federal Government financially incentivizing waste prevention, reuse, and the use of post-consumer recycled content through grants and tax credits. Adopting a national design for recyclability standards for products and packaging that includes standards for use of post-consumer recycled content.

Reducing subsidies to virgin materials, such as petrochemical feedstocks, that directly compete with the post-consumer recycled plastics, creating accountability throughout the recycling system by setting mandatory capture rate goals tied to timelines, standardized reporting requirements, and

verification of responsible end markets.

Supporting a national framework for extended producer responsibility for packaging and paper products that holds producers responsible for their products and packaging ensures they provide adequate and stable financial support for the recycling industry and local communities. Supporting whole life cycle analysis of materials that considers externalities such as plastic residuals that impact marine life, and adopting National labelling standards to reduce consumer confusion and support ability to recycle responsibly.

We applaud the Senate to support the United States' shift to a circular approach. As you look to the future, Seattle strongly encourages you to place a greater emphasis upstream on waste prevention and reuse while also continuing to support increased downstream diversion and recyclables and organics to reliable and responsible markets.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Fife-Ferris follows:]

Senator Carper. Thank you very, very much for that.

Now, we are going to hear from Mr. Marshall. Mr. Marshall, we are looking forward to your testimony. Thanks for joining us. Welcome. You are recognized; please proceed.

STATEMENT OF CODY MARSHALL, CHIEF SYSTEM OPTIMIZATION OFFICER,  
THE RECYCLING PARTNERSHIP

Mr. Marshall. Thank you, Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the importance of community grants to advance circularity, especially the Solid Waste Infrastructure Grant Program, or SWIFR.

My name is Cody Marshall, and I serve as the Chief System Optimization Officer for the Recycling Partnership, a purpose-driven organization that has a singular mission: to build a better recycling system. I have the distinct honor to lead a team that makes grants to communities across the United States to optimize and modernize recycling infrastructure and increase participation in recycling programs.

My introduction to the recycling industry was as a college student in rural Ohio, driving a truck collecting recyclables from campus.

I made recycling my career 16 years ago in Orange County, North Carolina by taking on the challenge of managing their curbside and rural recycling programs. It was there that I witnessed the profound impact recycling can have on communities. Drawing from my experience in Orange County and consulting for various public sector entities, I recognized the pressing need for a coordinated improvement within the recycling system.

With that ambition in mind, I helped launch the Recycling Partnership. Over the past 10 years, we have worked closely with communities, public sector leaders, nonprofits, and the private sector to deliver real impact across more than 3,500 recycling programs, from major cities to small towns.

Public sector-private sector partnerships have been critical to reduce waste, build local economies, and strengthen our domestic supply chains. It is from this experience that I address this committee.

Last year, we had the privilege of working with the City of New Orleans to assist in developing their proposal for SWIFR funding. I am happy to report that because of this funding, the city will offer curbside recycling service to all 150,000 single family homes. Not only will this deliver real results, the SWIFR funding unlocked additional funding from the partnership, which was made possible from private sector dollars. The public-private partnership will ensure the SWIFR funding is an enduring investment providing new materials for years to come.

SWIFR funding is making possible an enormous impact in New Orleans and across the Country, but many more communities need assistance. I cannot express enough how important it is that we fund the SWIFR program in 2025. When communities receive grants like SWIFR, they can provide access to more residents, modernize recycling systems, and develop cleaner streams of materials.

Grants have impacts long beyond their initial phase.

Equally as important are the resources needed to build an equitable, efficient, and transparent recycling system across the United States. Thank you, Chairman Carper and Ranking Member Capito, for introducing two critical pieces of legislation, the Recycling and Composting Accountability Act and the Recycling Infrastructure and Accessibility Act. Both bills, when passed, will provide important data and resources needed to ensure our domestic recycling systems deliver on the promise of a circular economy.

There is a lot of work to be done to make recycling systems as effective and efficient as possible. This involves rethinking how materials are produced, how packages are designed, and what happens after products are consumed. It is for this reason the Recycling Partnership both insists on meaningful change across the recycling system and assists communities and companies in enacting such change. We know that good policy has an important role to play.

We are working with States across the Nation to advocate for and implement extended producer responsibility. By establishing a national framework for EPR, we will be able to provide the funding and resources needed to transform the way we use and rely on materials. In doing so, we will establish the supply infrastructure and the demand for recycled content

necessary for a circular economy.

On behalf of the leadership at the Recycling Partnership, I can attest that we remain fully committed as a partner and a resource to Congress, our private sector partners, and our communities to deliver a better recycling system.

Thank you for your time and your lasting commitment to the change Americans deserve.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Marshall follows:]

Senator Carper. Well, thank you for your time and for your commitment, from all of us to all of you. I mentioned earlier, Marshall University is in Huntington, West Virginia, as you know. They have had some great football teams, some of the best football teams in the Country, actually, over the years.

I am thinking about how we take the legislation that Senator Capito, Senator Boozman, and I and others have crafted and move through this committee and move it through the Senate, how we get it through the House and onto the President's desk. We have made great progress, but I will use a football analogy. We are inside the red zone, but the ball is not inside the end zone.

So, as we leave here today, we have to figure out how to get this ball into the end zone. I think we can. All politics is personal. As a friend of mine likes to say, we have to push every button to get this done. There is so much that is depending on it, so many jobs, so much good for our economy, just good in terms of climate change. It works in so many different ways that we got to get the job done.

My first question, really, would be to the entire panel. I want to focus on SWIFR grants. As I think you all have mentioned in your testimonies, EPA's SWIFR Grant Program has unlocked funding for unique waste management projects across our entire country. States, communities, and nongovernmental



organizations have also awarded grants on their own for projects that bolster our Nation's recycling systems.

My question for each of you, would you each please share with us how these Federal investments will protect the environment, as well as contribute to the economy and job creation in communities across our Nation?

Mr. Marshall, I am going to ask you to respond first, and we will go to your right.

Mr. Marshall. Absolutely, thank you. As a granting organization, I can tell you that over the past 10 years of our existence, the money that we have invested in the system has resulted in the capture of more than a billion pounds of new recyclables, avoiding one million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions, so SWIFR is going to be doing the same thing.

The recycling system, if resourced in the appropriate way that we believe needs to be resourced, it can result in a \$30 billion positive economic impact through job creation and private sector investment.

Senator Carper. All right.

Ms. Fife-Ferris, did you agree with anything he has just said?

Ms. Fife-Ferris. Do I agree with it? Yes, I agree with it.

Senator Carper. All right, go ahead, proceed please.

Ms. Fife-Ferris. Yes, thank you. We are very excited about the possibility of bringing a private company to actually fill a hole in what we determined was the gap in the circular economy for the salvage lumber in our area.

This will displace the need to actually take virgin lumber out of our forests. It will also create carbon sinks. This old lumber is actually old-growth forest, when you think about it. Anything before 1940 probably was harvested out of our old-growth forests, so these are carbon sinks, and it is so much better.

From an economic point of view, these are jobs. You have jobs for the people who are deconstructing the houses, and we are actually complementing the funds that we are getting from SWIFR to train more people to do that. There are jobs to transport the lumber. There are jobs to actually de-nail and process the lumber.

There are jobs to market it, and then there are jobs to sell it. Then there are the jobs for the actual rebuilding of new houses, so these all create opportunities for new jobs in this sector.

Then, beyond that, the money is being used in other areas and other arenas, like in Hawaii, they are going to be using it in the reuse arena, and I can talk about that at a later time.

Senator Carper. Okay. Same question, Secretary Biser,

please.

Ms. Biser. In addition to that, we have a local government, Durham County, who received a grant through SWIFR to update and reconstruct their convenience center in a disadvantaged community, so we are seeing some real impacts along those lines.

But just to talk about the State data aspect of it for a moment, I mentioned earlier recycling being an inherently local activity, and it is important that States have the capacity they need to support those programs to help them understand how they can optimize and make sure that they are reaching their residents and providing access.

Having the ability to invest in data, which is not something we often have, is going to be really critical, not just for my State, but for other States, understand what is in the waste stream, understand where material is being generated, where the infrastructure to collect that material is lacking.

We have some MRF deserts that we are trying to address, especially in the northeastern part of our State. The more we can learn about what is being generated there, which residents have access, which don't, we can help support our local governments to make sure that not only can they provide additional resources, but also, as we have a limited amount of grant funding as a State that we can give out, we want to make

sure we are maximizing our rate of return on that and leveraging any kind of private investment we can, and data is going to enable us to do all of those things.

Senator Carper. All right, thank you. Thank you each for your responses.

Senator Capito?

Senator Capito. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I mentioned in my opening statement, the absolutely critical role that the private sector can play in this as part of partnerships with governments, local, State, and Federal. So in my legislation, we do prioritize trying to find funding for financially viable public-private partnerships.

You mentioned leveraging the private sector. Do you have a good example of where this is being done very well already in North Carolina and what kind of impacts that is having?

Ms. Biser. Sure. I can give you an example of Clear Path Recycling in North Carolina. They received a total of \$140,000 over three cycles from us in grants.

This is from State dollars, I will just reference, but this is a good example of, if we have more to invest, the type of experience we can have. It led to \$1.7 million private investment, so the \$140,000 leveraged \$1.7 million in that private investment and added 90 jobs to that facility.

Senator Capito. Is that one location?

Ms. Biser. One location, and it added 6,500 tons of added capacity to their operation. I will just say, in general, we have different grant programs, but one of the grant programs that is giving money directly to recycling businesses requires a match. What we end up seeing is a three-to-one match is what ends up happening in each of these situations, so we are leveraging a lot of private dollars by investing a little bit of State dollars.

Senator Capito. Mr. Marshall, do you have a good example for me on where those, I know you have members that are private and public, so the partnerships that are going on that you could recognize?

Mr. Marshall. Yes, absolutely. I think we are a great example of how the private sector is stepping up. Over the years, we have leveraged over \$200 million in private funding in these grant projects, but I would also like to note that what ends up happening is, the collection part of the recycling programs is the most expensive part of recycling.

That is often managed, always managed, by city and county governments, so when we fund and grant those programs, we are able to see that that supply is unlocked, and when that supply is unlocked through the granting programs, we almost always see the private sector coming in to invest in the local economy to use that material throughout the supply chain.

Senator Capito. I want to ask about rural America too, because, obviously, I live in a rural State. Every State has rural areas, and there are real problems with trying to have the sustainability of a recycling program. The local governments can't really afford them; there are education issues as to what can be recycled, how, when, and where.

There have been a lot of stops and starts in rural areas. I mean, I can speak for my own city. We have had programs, and then we haven't had a program, and then we have a program, and then it is a limited program. It causes citizens to just sort of throw up their hands and kind of give up a little bit, where we don't want that.

What could you recommend, and I will go to you, Secretary Biser, because you have, obviously, a lot of rural in North Carolina. How can we do better with our role? We were introducing a spoke-and-hub kind of system that can help these rural communities have viable recycling programs.

Ms. Biser. Senator Capito, first of all, I appreciate your leadership in trying to get resources for hub-and-spoke systems. I think that is one of the primary methods that we look to. As Mr. Marshall noted, there is a lot of cost in the collection aspect of recycling, and this is an area where we can help local governments reduce some of their costs.

It can be very expensive to have somebody come pick up a

load from a very small town that can't fill up the back of a tractor trailer load, but if you are able to have centralized locations to collect materials among a lot of smaller towns, they can pool their resources and better afford to have programs in place.

We know that recycling is hard to turn on and off like a faucet because then you create a lot of confusion and it reduces participation rates, so the more that we can find solutions like that that are infrastructure-based and other ways to help assist with the cost, I think the better we will be at recycling.

Senator Capito. So, Ms. Fife-Ferris, Seattle is obviously not a rural area, but you have probably seen areas in your State or that feed into your system, maybe, how does that, what improvements could we make there?

Ms. Fife-Ferris. So, we have actually been working at a State level on our, hopefully, getting extended producer responsibility that would then create funding for the rural areas. It is a big problem, and it is not an easy fix.

The hope would be that then we could have resources that could be invested in the rural areas in a stable manner to ensure that they have accessibility with the hub-and-spoke type of program, which drop-off, and other things. Those are approaches that were working at a State level, because we want to bring equity statewide with respect to recycling.

We are also working upstream trying to get products to be more consistent and recyclable, because regardless of whether you have access to recycling, if you don't have good products that are recyclable to put into the bin or drop-off and then you have markets that they are going to be sold into downstream, that also causes a hitch in making the recycling not possible, and that impacts rural communities even more than communities.

Senator Capito. Right, we are going to need more materials as we move towards, hopefully, this circular economy. That means rural America, every part of the Country, has to really play here effectively, because we know we have enough waste to do that. It is just getting it to the right place.

Let me just ask for a clarification here on extended producer responsibility. Let us take an example of a piece of clothing, maybe, or maybe food. You mentioned food. That would be that the producer of whatever that product is, and maybe food is not a good example, something that is more sustained, like a glass bottle. We will just use that. That means whoever produces the glass bottle would pay into a system.

Is that what it means to you, and then that money would then go to the localities to help with the recycling?

Ms. Fife-Ferris. So, in a typical producer responsibility, we are talking about packaging and paper products, usually, not clothing. Though, we have producer responsibilities for paint



and medicine and all kinds of things.

Right now, we are working on what is the bulk in our recycling cart or in our garbage. Yes, it would depend on how you define producer, but it would be the person who puts it into your marketplace. The brand or the producer, it depends on who is putting it into your marketplace, and then they would pay a fee based on the volume of the numbers and then what that material is that they are using, how recyclable is it.

They use a term called eco-modulation where the cost of putting that product into the market will be determined by how easily recyclable that is, and captured for end markets.

Senator Capito. Are you doing this now? No? You are looking to do it?

Ms. Fife-Ferris. No, we are actually, but California and Oregon are setting up systems for it, as are Colorado and Maine. They are the four States that have passed producer responsibility programs. All different, but somewhat similar.

So, the money would go into a pot, and that money would be managed by a PRO, which is a producer responsibility organization that is actually made up of the private sector producers, and then they report to the State as a regulatory body.

But there would be what we call rates and dates. In other words, they would try to have capture rates based on the

different types of materials by a certain date, and they would use the funding to help set up programs to ensure that that happens statewide.

Senator Capito. Sounds like there is a lot to iron out there to figure that out, but I am not saying it is not worth it. I am sure it is, but there are a lot of details to figure out. Anyway, I appreciate that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator Carper. Yes. Great questions.

Senator Sullivan, thanks for rejoining us. You are recognized. Thank you.

Senator Sullivan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the witnesses testifying today.

As I mentioned in my remarks just a couple minutes ago here, Alaska, we are a resource-rich but infrastructure-poor State in terms of just everything. Roads, bridges, ports, harbors, telecommunications. But that infrastructure poverty also extends to recycling infrastructure, particularly in our rural communities.

These SWIFR grants are good news. They are part of my and Senator Whitehouse's Save Our Seas 2.0 legislation and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, as already mentioned. One thing that I have heard about, and I would like Ms. Biser and Mr. Marshall, maybe you can take a crack at this, that the process, in terms of funding, has been very slow.

Are there ways to streamline the EPA funding process to get these grants out faster and then maybe even simplify it, right? One thing that you don't want to have happen, and you guys are very familiar with how to write grants and everything, but for a lot of communities that is a big undertaking, just in and of itself.

You don't want the groups that are kind of the professionals at grant-writing to always get the grants. Streamlining getting the resources out more quickly, and then helping communities that maybe aren't so experienced in this. Those are broad questions, but I would love your views on them.

Ms. Biser. Thank you, Senator Sullivan. I know Alaska has some particular challenges.

I don't believe there is a material recovery facility in your State. That can add to some of the challenges, so I am excited to see you all receiving funding. I believe that Alaska in undertaking a solid waste management plan with this funding, which is also a great step.

In terms of the EPA process, I know that this was a situation where they had to create a new grant program completely from scratch, so in working --

Senator Sullivan. Which is a good thing, but also a scary thing, right, depending on which way they go with it.

Ms. Biser. It can be challenging. I will tell you, we

have worked closely with the office that has been building this program and understand that they have been working, I think, as quickly as they can, but still hear frustrations from folks who want to get funding out more quickly.

I will say, for the next round of funding, we are hearing that that could be potentially sometime in October, so we are anticipating having those opportunities again. I know that North Carolina looks to provide technical assistance to our communities to help as they are applying in this grant program, and then other programs under the IIJA. We will continue to do that.

The other area that we are receiving technical assistance and that EPA is providing across the Country is for the CPRG grants. That will be another potential area that we could take advantage of. That is a bigger pot of funding, especially aiming towards any kind of climate emission reductions, including food waste, so I know that our State is planning to take advantage of that as well.

We do appreciate the technical assistance. I will say that we tried to have patience with EPA since they were creating something brand new. That is always a challenge, and we will continue to work with them if we see opportunities to streamline.

Senator Sullivan. Good.

Mr. Marshall?

Mr. Marshall. Yes, it is a challenge to manage these types of granting programs. We have about 150 active grants at the Recycling Partnership, and I myself have about 30 people working on them, so it is critical to resource them because there are a lot of questions; you have to pay invoices.

The positive thing about this, we reimburse a lot. Upon award, action starts happening. I know money might not be flowing yet, but momentum is growing in these places that have been awarded, so there might be a positive way to look at this also, because they are excited that they received the award. They are looking for other money. They have contacted us for additional money to match the EPA dollars, so action is happening, even if money might not be flowing.

I really appreciate your bringing up that critical need to support these local governments to help write the grants. We supported a few communities that needed to write grants to apply for this money, and I think that would be a really critical step, to really have a robust system to help urban areas and the rural areas get applied.

Because you are right, people that would apply to this are also the arborists or the sheriff at their local government. They don't have time to write grants.

Senator Sullivan. Yes, or they don't have the experience.

Mr. Marshall. That is right.

Senator Sullivan. Let me end with just a follow-up question. I am kind of running out of time here.

Senator Carper. No, you are not. You are not.

Senator Sullivan. Ms. Fife-Ferris, I understand you were a consultant in Alaska a number of years ago, and so you know these challenges specifically with regard to rural communities, limited financial resources for communities that are trying to benefit from these kind of programs.

Maybe this is a question for all of you. I know, Mr. Marshall, you have also testified about the importance of public-private partnerships, the Feds, the State, the local governments can't, they can't do everything here, so how do we enhance that element of addressing this broader challenge, so maybe Ms. Fife-Ferris, if we can start with you?

Ms. Fife-Ferris. That is a tough question. To get the private industry --

Senator Sullivan. But also your experience with the rural communities in Alaska, in particular.

Ms. Fife-Ferris. Oh, my experience, yes. When I was working, I was working primarily in Juneau, and we were working on a landfill, and they had a waste-to-energy facility that the local government was looking at taking over, but I also consulted with up in Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Yes, you can't bury waste very easily when the ground is frozen. You don't have someplace to take it. You don't have roadways to haul your material out of your city. You have to barge it. We looked at barging recyclables down to California. We looked at barging recyclables to Hawaii, at one point.

It is really, really difficult, and so you have to look at the community. I think this is a great area where waste prevention, and using durables, getting rid of single-use plastics, looking at what is right for the community that you are in and not something that fits for Seattle isn't necessarily going to fit for one of your small, rural communities on the coastline, but there are ways to do it.

Then, the materials that are coming into your area should be recyclable and easy to capture; then you can back haul them, you can back barge them. In other words, you are bringing up supplies up to the area, and then you back haul them on that same barge or thing. There are ways to work it out, but it is not an easy solution.

Senator Sullivan. Yes, and it is expensive.

Ms. Fife-Ferris. It is expensive. Producer responsibility, you make it, you manage it.

Senator Sullivan. Mr. Marshall, on the public-private partnership issue? I know you have testified on that before.

Mr. Marshall. Yes, absolutely. I think sharing the

stories of public-private partnerships is critical in this space. That is one way to do it, so the Recycling Partnership actually received a grant from EPA Region Four to start ten years ago, so that has really gotten our start, and now we are fully funded by the private sector to deliver funds.

I would also highlight that those stories and connections are really happening at the local of what the Conference of Mayors. This has been a major subject for them every single year, and so I just think what you are highlighting is critical to really lean in and learn how to do it. We are trying to get in front of as many local governments as possible, so they understand how to access these dollars.

Senator Sullivan. Great, thank you. Thanks to the witnesses. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it.

Senator Carper. You bet. I just want to acknowledge the good work that you and Sheldon Whitehouse, Senator Whitehouse, have done on Save Our Seas that is still bearing fruit.

Before I ask another question or two, I just want to say that I, my staff and I would be happy to work together with your folks and certainly with Senator Capito's team to ensure that EPA provides technical assistance to rural communities in Alaska and West Virginia and other places where they need it in this regard when they apply for grants.

Senator Sullivan. Thank you.



Senator Carper. You bet. Okay. We have had some mention here today about methane, food waste, and that sort of thing.

I must say, we have a son that lives out in the Bay Area in California, and every now and then, we will go fly out and see him. We fly in and out of SFO, San Francisco Airport. You walk through that airport, and they have, you know, sometimes you go to airports, you are lucky to find a distinction between recycling bins and non-recycling bins.

In San Francisco, they basically have three bins, and they have them throughout the airport. They are color-coded. One of them is for recyclables, one is for just trash that is not recyclable, the other is food waste.

One of the things that they do in the Bay Area, they have businesses, pretty successful businesses, that take the food waste and, through a process I won't describe here, but they create a fuel for buses and for trucks and stuff like that. In adversity, lies opportunity, but they have got it right. I have been intrigued by their success and anxious for us to replicate that in Delaware and other States, as well.

In October of 2023, this would be a question, I think, for Secretary Biser and Ms. Fife-Ferris, but in October of last year, the EPA published a report that found that nearly 60 percent of methane emissions from municipal solid waste landfills actually does come from food waste.

Earlier this year, we held, as some will recall, we held an EPW hearing that explored strategies to reduce methane, a greenhouse gas that is, I believe, over 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas. One of the strategies that emerged as a solution at that hearing was waste diversion. My question, both for Secretary Biser and for Ms. Fife-Ferris, is: what efforts are currently underway in your State and your city to divert food waste from landfills?

Ms. Fife-Ferris. Within Seattle, food waste is banned from being put into our garbage, and it has been since 2015. We have extensive collection opportunities, both at the curbside and then out in the commercial sector. We have robust composting facility opportunities. We have facilities for processing the materials, which is critical.

At the State level, they just passed a law where they are going to be studying how to better move food waste out of the waste stream, and they are going to be mandating that collection opportunities be available statewide for organic materials, but also supporting the processing aspect. You can't collect it if you don't have someplace to haul it, to process it.

Food waste is a local type of, you have to do it within a reasonable distance from where you are doing it, and that is one way to move the food waste.

We also have an extensive food rescue program where we are

working with our local grocery stores or large businesses have these big cafeterias or restaurants to help move the food out the back door that is edible to the food banks or the rescue organizations that can use that. We are actually entering into a grant program where we are going to be giving money to help come up with innovative ideas on transportation. We will be announcing the winners of those grants probably within the next month.

We have identified different ways, and then we also educate our residents on how, we call it love food, stop waste, and so we educate them on how to make better shopping decisions so that they are not throwing those strawberries out at the end of the week, and they actually eat them.

Senator Carper. That is a great rundown. That is wonderful.

Same question, Secretary Biser, same question. What is going on in the Tar Heel State that you maybe want to mention to us with respect to diverting food waste from landfills?

Ms. Biser. We are, in addition to looking at data, as I mentioned earlier, we have been analyzing how much wasted food is being generated versus our commercial composting capacity. It is a 2.1 million ton gap, so we are working with the industry to look at options there.

We also have a Use the Food NC campaign that we are doing,

an educational campaign statewide along the lines of what Ms. Fife-Ferris was just discussing, trying to help folks understand both how to save money, I believe that the number is about \$1,500 per year that the average family wastes in food that they buy but never eat, but also how to keep it out of landfills.

We also have been convening our food hubs and food banks to look at how we can better help support them in the food rescue. Of course, we want the first priority for rescued food to go to feeding people who are hungry or food insecure before we look at other options such as animal feed or composting.

There have also been efforts to work with our cultural industry for providing food for feed at those operations, and then we are also supporting local government programs through a grant program. Recently, we gave a grant to a local company called Compost Now that is installing new tipping stations, reinforcing their loading dock, and making improvements for their compactors.

Senator Carper. Thank you. Thank you very much. Those were encouraging comments.

Senator Capito, any other questions?

Senator Capito. I don't. I just want to thank the panel, and I appreciate everything. We will get to work; help us on the House side to get these bills across the finish line. That would be a good takeaway for today.

Senator Carper. The Senate is about to start our first vote. In fact, I think we have just started our first vote. Senator Capito may feel the need to run and vote. I want to just take another minute or two and ask a couple questions before I head out.

Again, from my heart, thank you for believing in these issues and leading in these issues. Somehow, we have to figure out how to get the ball into the end zone in the House of Representatives. This is not something that either of us can do by ourselves. We can do a part of it by ourselves, but we have got to get this done.

There is a lot at stake here and great opportunities, as well. We look forward to doing that.

When I first became governor of Delaware, an old governor, a much older governor, came to see me. I was just a pup at the time. He came to see me, and he said over lunch at the governor's house, he said, Governor Tom, here is one piece of advice for you. I said, what is that? And he said, the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing. I said, the what? The main thing is the keep the main thing the main thing.

Here, in terms of moving this legislation and putting it on the President's desk is, we have to get it through the House. That is something that is going to take every bit of our efforts with our colleagues together. We look forward to that.

I will see you on the Floor, okay? Thank you, and thanks for your great work here.

I have, maybe, at least one more question on reuse. I am going to ask Ms. Fife-Ferris this question, if I could. I think, in your written testimony, you mentioned a public-private partnership that was established between Seattle Public Utilities and local businesses called Reuse Seattle.

This program has supported the promotion of reusable food service ware as an alternative to single-use containers in places like entertainment venues, in places like restaurants, maybe that includes public schools, and that sort of thing, throughout the city.

Would you just describe for us some of the successes of the program? How has the city been able to drive business and individuals to this program? Make sure, there you go.

Ms. Fife-Ferris. We started the program by getting people together who were stakeholders and getting them all interested, and that started to attract interest from reusable product vendors. Then, we worked closely with our stadiums, like our large stadiums, Climate Pledge Arena, where the Mariners, Lumen Field, where our Seahawks play.

We have also worked with our movie theaters, closed venues, a lot of music venues, festivals, with their actual people who plan these events. We just made connections, and we aren't

actually doing the work. We are not funding the work. We are funding a person to bring people together, but then we have also helped them with siting a wash facility, and then we have been working closely with PR3 on standardization.

Now, as of the last count, we have, through our activities that have gone on, the actual events, have resulted in displacing over a million single use items with reusables, but standards are really critical. You have a cup that people won't take as a souvenir, and they will put it in the bin. Then you have to have bins, but our vision is that this goes city-wide, and that we work with fast food locations.

And we have drop-off locations around the city, and the city will help with that, that are similar to like, your library books, and you put in, you will have a QR code, or you will have a bar code, and it will go into that. It will go into a wash station, and then it will be scanned, and then it will be redistributed.

That is our vision, but right now, we are working primarily in the closed-loop environments, but very large closed-loop environments, went you think about Lumen Stadium and where the Mariners play.

Senator Carper. All right. Follow-up question that relates to this, but what, and you may have, in part, you have answered this, but I am going to ask it anyway. What lessons

can communities across the Country, West Virginia, Delaware, and other places, what lessons can the rest of us take from programs like Reuse Seattle?

Ms. Fife-Ferris. I think you have to start small. Identify people who are groups that are really interested, small music venues, small theaters. You start, and you pilot, and you figure out what will work. Then, you expand it and you look for, there are a lot of people moving into this space.

So you can learn from what other people have done, and you can put that into play where you are. You don't have to recreate the wheel, and then you look to places like the PR3 and the ARKUPS and others that are really active in this arena, and you look for help from them. Those are all private companies or nonprofits, so the government can convene it, but let the private sector run with it.

Senator Carper. Okay, good. Thank you.

Mr. Marshall, I have one more question. Would you be up to it? Want to give it a shot? All right.

Recycling Partnership's Feet on the Street program in an initiative that provides direct feedback to consumers by tagging residential recycling carts with information about what residents can and cannot put in their recycling bin. This sounds great.

Mr. Marshall, what have been some success stories from the



Feet on the Street program, and are there other projects that the Recycling Partnership is working on to improve recycling in communities across our Country?

Mr. Marshall. I am so glad you asked. The Feet on the Street program is a strategy that we use that we have developed over the years to try to get as close to that recycling behavior as possible. We have people in the field partnering with States and cities around the Country giving feedback, direct feedback to residents, checking out their recycling, talking to residents, and giving them that information on the cards, those cart tags that you mentioned.

One of the most recent and biggest successes we have had is in Smyrna, Delaware. We had a partnership with the Delaware -- Senator Carper. Home of the Smyrna Eagles.

Mr. Marshall. Home of the Smyrna Eagles, I was going to say that.

Senator Carper. Just north of Dover.

Mr. Marshall. The Delaware Waste Authority really wanted to test strategy at the local level to see how we can improve recycling, and they take those learnings to scale across the State. We love that because we take those learnings to scale across the Country.

Through this work and through engaging the residents in Smyrna, we saw a 78 percent reduction in contamination, which

might not mean much if you are not in the recycling field, that is a huge reduction.

Senator Carper. That is great. That is great.

Mr. Marshall. So, we are really proud of that work. Delaware is ready to scale it and replicate it, and we are really ready to do that around the Country.

I think another, you asked for another success story in communities around the Country that we are working in. One would be, connecting to the public-private partnerships that we are discussing, Orange County, Florida is one example I would share where we worked on the same Feet on the Street program throughout the county, improving quality drastically. What that does is, it sends signals to the private sector, and now they are looking to have private sector investment in Orange County and Orlando to build a recycling facility to manage that material.

Senator Carper. That is good. The people of Smyrna, I hope they are watching this hearing.

Mr. Marshall. Me too.

Senator Carper. This is one of the most exciting things that has happened in Smyrna today. This is great.

We are voting in the Senate. I think they want me to come and vote, so I am going to close it out here, but I just really want to thank you all. I want to thank you for what you do with

your lives, for our Country, for your States, and I want to thank you, certainly, for your time and your testimony today.

I want to thank Senator Capito. I want to thank our staffs, who have approached this issue, really, in a truly bipartisan way. I found a long time ago that bipartisan solutions are lasting solutions, and that is the way we approach things around here.

Your perspectives help us appreciate that although there are significant challenges relating to our waste, there are opportunities for us to do better. I believe the Federal Government can and should work with State and local governments, as well as nonprofits and the private sector to help us build a circular economy and a more sustainable future for our Nation, for our kids, and our grandchildren. I look forward to our continued work together to protect our one and only planet.

For some final housekeeping, I ask unanimous consent to submit for the record a variety of materials that relate to today's hearing, including letters from stakeholders. Senators will be allowed to submit questions for the record through the close of business on June 5th. We will compile those questions and send them to you, to our witnesses, and I am going to ask that you try to respond by June 20th.

This is my favorite part, when I get to the end of the hearing, my other colleagues have left to go vote, and I can ask

unanimous consent, and nobody can object because they are all gone.

[The referenced information follows:]

Senator Carper. I get to serve in the Senate for another seven months or so. People say to me almost every day, people are very nice, they say to me almost every day, I hope you are enjoying your retirement.

I say, I am not retired. Frankly, I have no intention to ever retire, God willing, but we have plenty of work to do in this committee and in the Senate and the House. We have to figure out how to thread the needle over in the House on the recycling legislation. We have, I think, done good work here. It is not probably perfect. We can certainly, everything we do, I know we can do better.

We look forward to working with Democrats and with Republicans and the Administration until we can finally get the ball into the end zone.

Let me just turn around and say to our staffs, is there anything else that we are missing here? Okay. With that, it is a wrap. With that, the Senate hearing is adjourned.

Thank you all very much.

[Whereupon, at 11:42 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]