EPA's Circular Economy Strategy Series and Recycling Programs

ASTSWMO Materials Management Roundtable

August 24, 2022

Nicole Villamizar, Deputy Director
Resource Conservation and Sustainability Division
U.S. EPA Office of Resource Conservation & Recovery

Swarupa Ganguli, Acting Chief
Resource Conservation Branch
U.S. EPA Office of Resource Conservation & Recovery

Session Goals

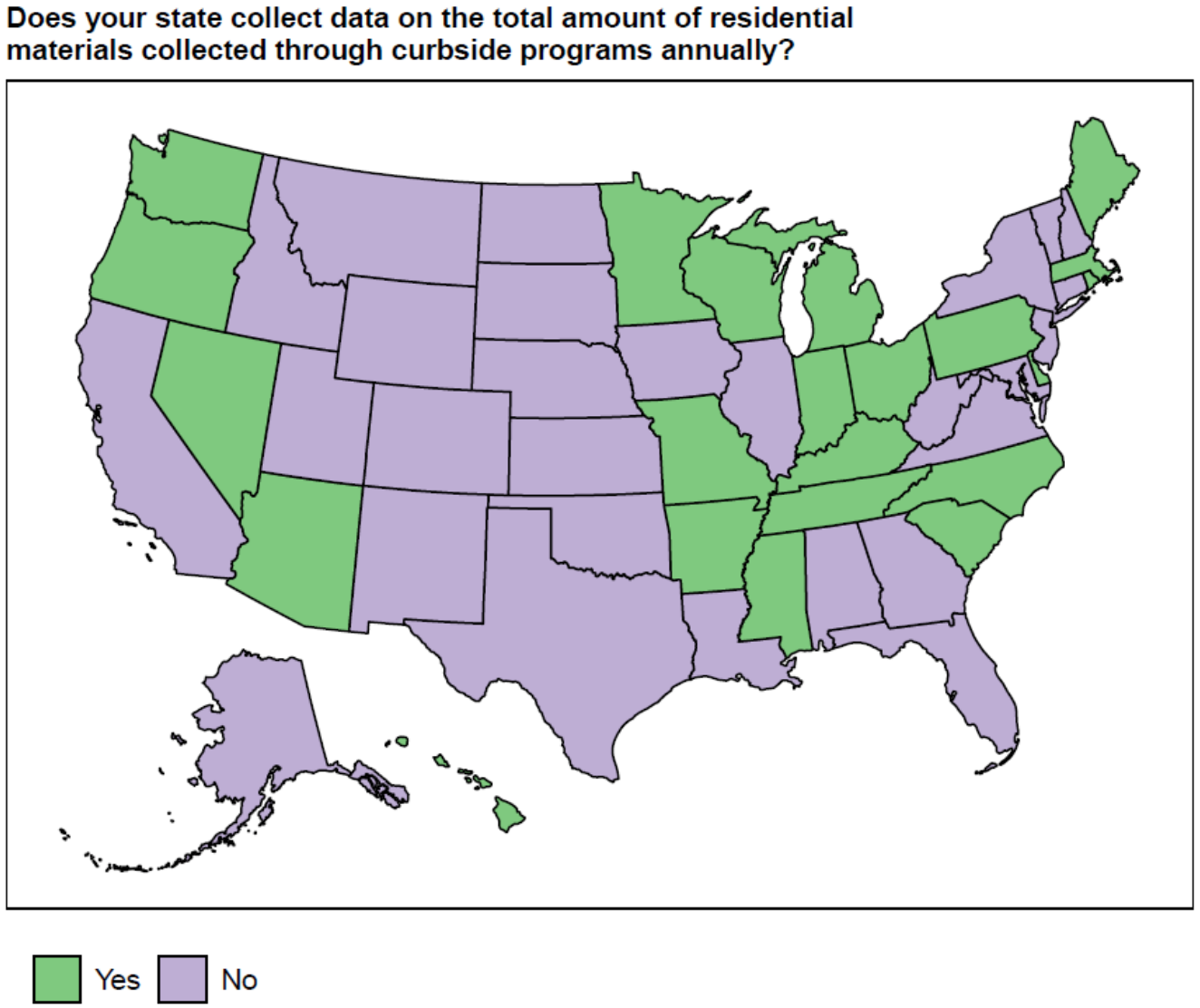
- **Share updates on key activities with EPA's Recycling and Circular Economy Program**
  - SOS 2.0 Act
  - Data and Measurement efforts
- **Provide latest information about new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law programs related to recycling**
  - Recycling Education and Outreach Grant Program
  - Model Recycling Program Toolkit
  - Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling Grant Program

Recent Congressional and Policy Drivers Shaping EPA's Materials Management Work

- FY20 Appropriations directed EPA to produce a national recycling strategy
- 2020 Save Our Seas 2.0 Act provides authority for grants, reports and a strategy
- Government Accountability Office report includes actions for EPA to strengthen recycling and recommend future policies
- FY21 Appropriations asked EPA to collect data on recycling and single-use plastics
- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law passed in November 2021 providing funding & new programs
- National Recycling Strategy released in November 2021
- 20+ pieces of proposed legislation related to recycling

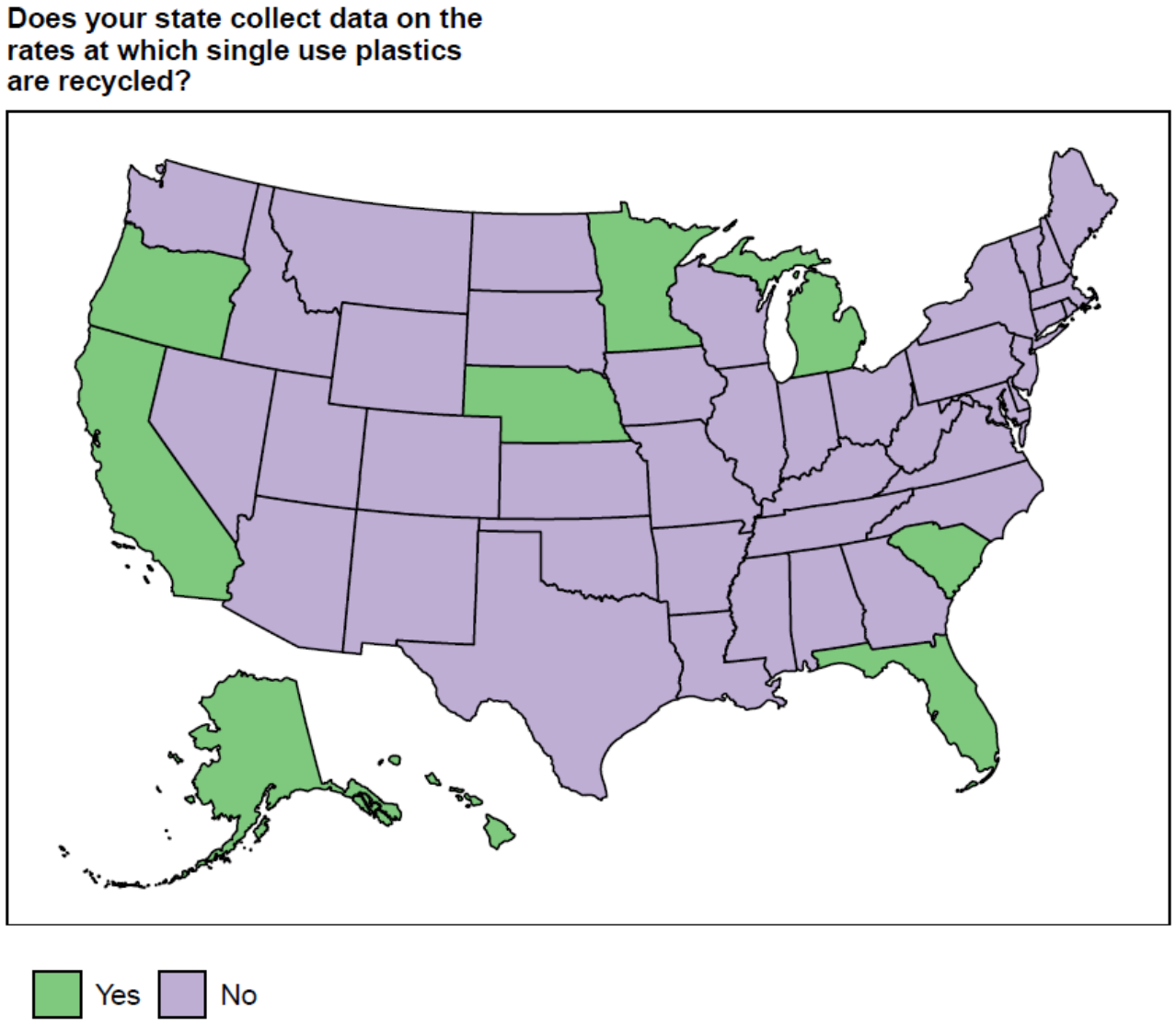
- Became law in December 2020
- Gives EPA new authority to fund improvements to solid waste management programs and infrastructure
- Directs EPA to Develop (for example):
  - Strategy on Post-Consumer Materials Management and Water Management
  - Report on Eliminating Barriers to Recycling
  - Report on Ways to Spur Markets for Recycled Plastic
  - Report on Opportunities for Innovative Uses of Plastic Waste
  - Study on How to Create Less Plastic Waste

States That Collect Recycling Data



- Congress directed EPA to collect recycling information from States and Territories in 2022
- Findings:
  - 54% of state respondents do not track the total amounts of materials collected in residential curbside recycling programs
  - States and Territories need more resources to collect and improve recycling data

State Data Collection on Plastics Recycling



- States and Territories struggle to properly track the amount of single use plastics that are recycled
- Only 20% of respondents track recycling of single use plastics
  - These 10 states typically only collect data on plastics #1 and #2

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)

- Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling Grants
- Recycling Education and Outreach Grants
- Battery Collection Best Practices and Labeling Guidelines

Circular Economy Strategy Series

Objectives:

A. Improve Markets for Recycling Commodities

B. Increase Collection and Improve Materials Management Infrastructure

C. Reduce Contamination in the Recycled Materials Stream

D. Enhance Policies to Support Recycling

E. Standardize Measurement and Increase Data Collection

EPA is establishing a 10-year vision that embraces zero waste and circularity, sustainable materials management, and addresses climate change, and environmental justice.

Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling Grant Program

What is the Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling Grant Program?

Total Funding: $275M

- $55 million/year from FY22-FY26
- Available until expended

Goals:

- Support improvements to recycling programs, post-consumer materials management, and waste management infrastructure
- Justice40 covered program

Eligible Entities:

- U.S. States and political subdivisions of states
- Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands
- District of Columbia
- Federally recognized tribal governments
- Former tribal reservations in Oklahoma (as determined by the Secretary of the Interior)
- Alaskan Native Villages as defined in Public Law 92-203
- Intertribal Consortia consistent with the requirements in 40 CFR 35.504(a)

What infrastructure activities are eligible for funding?

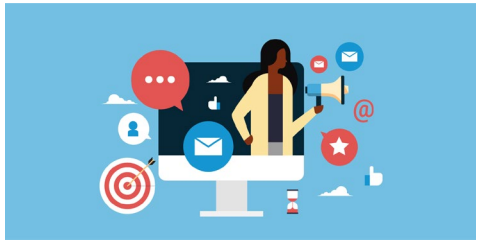
- The SOS 2.0 Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law broadly define projects that are eligible for recycling infrastructure funding.
- The EPA Administrator may provide grants to:
  - Implement the strategy developed under section 301(a)
  - Support improvements to local post-consumer materials management, including municipal recycling programs; and
  - Assist local waste management authorities in making improvements to local waste management systems.

Recycling Education and Outreach Grant Program and Model Recycling Program Toolkit

What is the Recycling Education and Outreach Grant Program?

Total Funding: $75M

- 15 million/year from FY22-FY26
- Available until expended



Goals:

- Support education and outreach on consumer recycling and waste prevention
- Inform public on what is accepted in community recycling program
- Increase collection rates and decrease contamination in recycling
- Justice40 covered program (in addition to 20% minimum legislative set-aside for low-income, rural, or communities identified as Native American)

Eligible entities:

- U.S. States, including the District of Columbia
- Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands
- Local governments
- Federally recognized tribal governments
- Native Hawaiian organizations, Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, Office of Hawaiian Affairs
- Non-profit organizations
- Public-private partnerships

What outreach and education activities are eligible for funding?

- Public service announcements
- Door-to-Door education and outreach campaigns
- Social media and digital outreach
- Advertising campaigns
- Toolkits for municipal and/or commercial recycling programs
- Labeling/Signs
- Information on the benefits of recycling
- Business recycling outreach
- What happens after the recycling bin
- Information on the importance of quality in the recycling stream
- Other activities determined appropriate to carry out

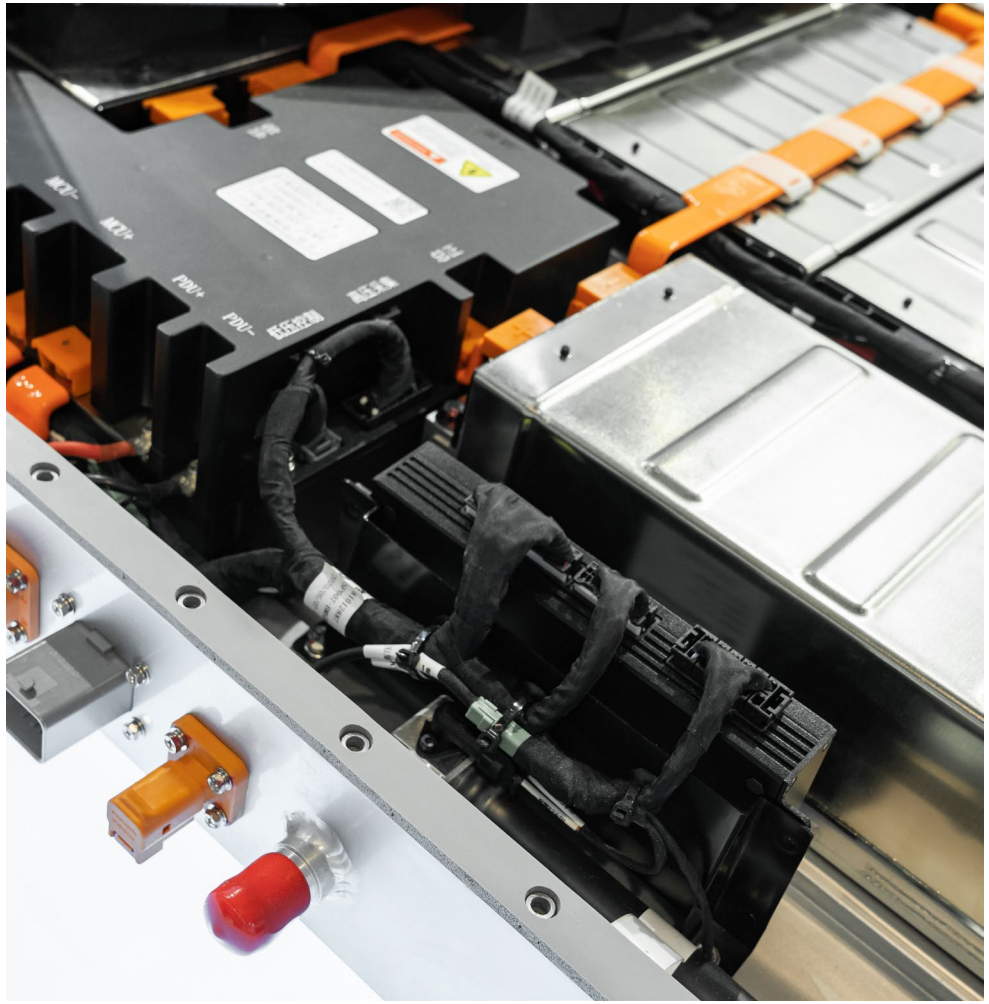
What is the Model Recycling Program Toolkit?

- A standardized set of terms and examples to describe materials that are accepted by a residential recycling program
- Information that can be widely applied across residential recycling programs
- Best practices for the collection and processing of recycled materials
- A community self-assessment guide to identify gaps in existing recycling program
- Training modules that enable States and nonprofit organizations to provide technical assistance to units of local government
- Access to consumer educational materials that states, tribes, and units of local government can adapt and use in recycling programs
- A guide to measure the effectiveness of a grant received under the Education and Outreach grant program

Batteries Collection and Labeling Guidelines

Why Are Batteries Important?

- They **power our electronics, transportation systems**, and more.
- They contain **critical minerals,** which can be recovered and reused.
- They can **help tackle climate change.**



What Are the Benefits of Recycling Batteries?

- Prevent valuable materials from going into the waste stream
- Reduce energy needed, and greenhouse gases generated, to manufacture new batteries
- Reduce the extraction of valuable and limited virgin resources
- Avoid fires caused by improper battery disposal
- Reduce waste going to landfills

What Is The Battery Collection Best Practices Initiative?

Best practices will focus on:

- Identifying and increasing accessibility to battery collection locations
- Promoting consumer education
- Reducing hazards from improper disposal (fires)

Best practices will be:

- Technically and economically feasible
- Environmentally sound and safe for workers
- Beneficial to increasing the recovery of critical minerals

How Will EPA Develop The Best Practices?

- **Synthesize input** from governments, NGOs, and the private sector through feedback sessions and the Request for Information (RFI).
- **Develop a draft report** and provide **opportunity for public comment**.
- **Submit the report** to Congress by November 15, 2023.

What Is the Battery Labeling Guidelines Initiative?

- **Labeling guidelines** for end-of-life batteries
- **Communication materials** for battery producers, consumers, and other stakeholders about the reuse and recycling of critical materials from batteries

Example of a battery label

Engagement: Participants Reached November 2021-July 2022

108

participant engagement meetings held across the country on National Recycling Strategy/ Bipartisan Infrastructure Law activities

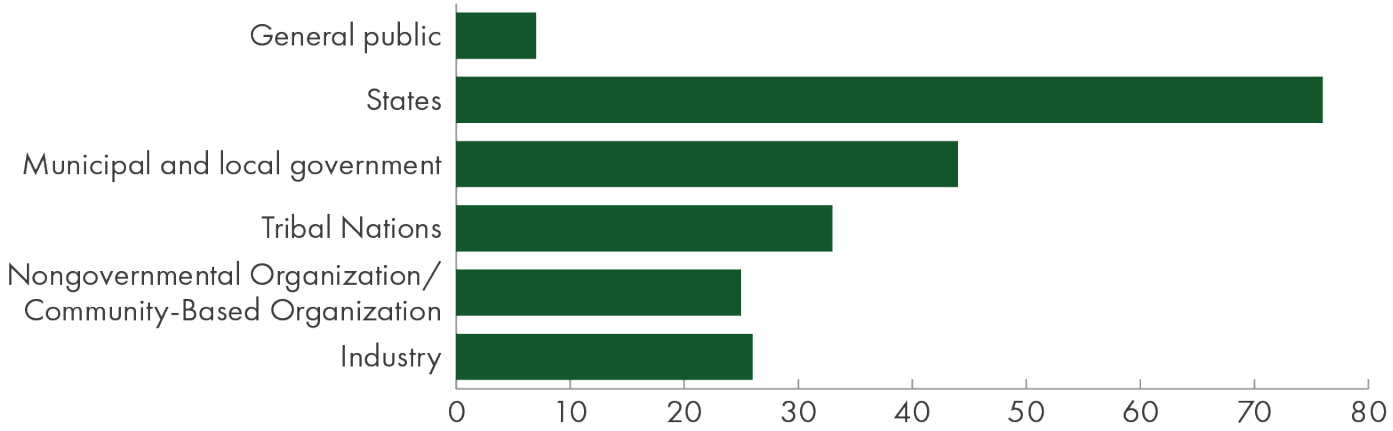
4,589

participants representing states, Tribal Nations, local government, nongovernmental organizations, and industry reached through meetings

Last Updated 7/26/2022

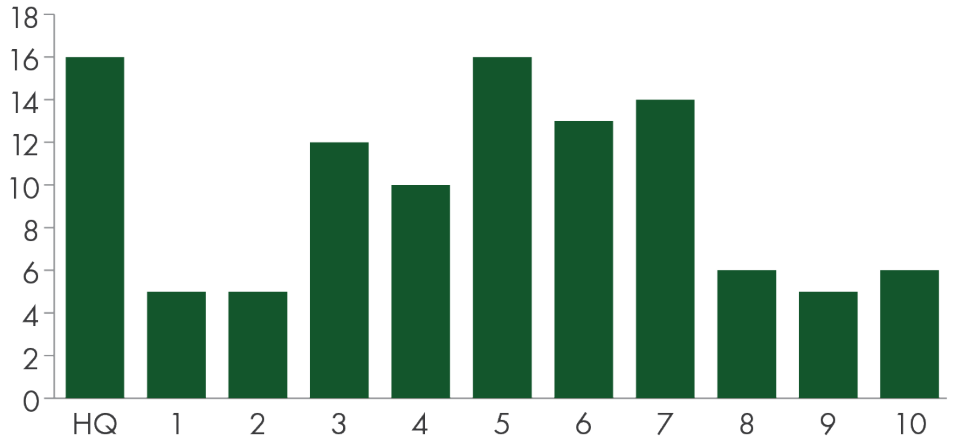
Engagement: Participants Reached November 2021-July 2022

MEETINGS ATTENDED BY PARTICIPANT TYPE



Last Updated 7/26/2022

MEETINGS CONDUCTED BY EPA REGION



Last Updated 7/26/2022

Thank you!

- **Sign up to *Stay Connected* to learn more about grants, future strategies and reports:** https://www.epa.gov/recyclingstrategy/forms/stay-connected
- **Training for Grant Applicants:** https://www.epa.gov/grants/recipient-training-opportunities
- **Questions? Email:** RecyclingEd@epa.gov (Recycling Education and Outreach); or SWIFR@epa.gov (Solid Waste Infrastructure and Recycling)

THANK YOU!

EPA