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House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee
Subcommittee on Environment and Economy
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I am pleased to testify before this Committee on the importance of recycling of solid waste materials as a strategy that has significant environmental, energy efficiency and economic benefits. The Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) strongly supports recycling and is very pleased that the U.S. Congress is exploring ways to expand recycling nation-wide. We have reviewed the discussion draft legislation, Increasing Manufacturing Competitiveness Through Improved Recycling Act of 2012, and believe that having Congress recognize the importance of recycling and its contributions to the economy and environment is very significant.

SWANA is a not-for-profit professional association operating under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. We have over 7,800 individual members, 65 percent from the public sector and 35 percent from the private sector; and 45 Chapters in the United States and Canada. We provide our members with extensive professional development opportunities including training, education, certification, networking, scholarships, internships, research and publications.

SWANA's mission is to advance the practice of environmentally and economically sound management or municipal solid waste in North America. Since recycling is often both economically and environmentally sound, and is a preferred technology for managing municipal solid wastes, it is an essential part of SWANA's professional development efforts.

A brief listing of SWANA's recycling programs include:

- Cutting edge training programs with courses targeted toward recycling professionals including courses on Managing Recycling Systems and Managing Recycling of Construction and Demolition Materials.
- A Certification Program where individuals can demonstrate their competence and expertise in various aspects of recycling.
- A Recycling and Special Waste Technical Division, one of the largest technical divisions at SWANA, that works to promote state-of-the-art approaches to recycling through conferences, symposia, newsletters, and which provides the faculty for our training courses.
- An Excellence Awards Program that recognizes outstanding solid waste and recycling programs that utilize effective technologies and processes in system design and operations, advance worker and community health and safety, and implement successful public education and outreach programs.
- An Applied Research Foundation that produces research reports on various recycling and solid waste topics that have reached tens of thousands of solid waste management professionals through articles in industry magazines and journals.
- An Advocacy Program that represents the interests of solid waste and recycling professionals by being a proactive advocate of environmentally and economically sound recycling and solid waste management legislation and regulations.

Now turning to the discussion draft legislation, we certainly agree that the manufacturing sector can increase its competitiveness, reduce its energy costs and emission levels and improve landfill diversion through an increase in the use of recyclable materials in its manufacturing processes. Increased energy efficiency in the manufacturing sector can increase domestic

employment, including higher paying jobs. It is clear that recyclable materials are perfectly acceptable feed stocks to produce new materials and products.

It is important that the data specified in the bill lead to increased use of recycled materials in manufacturing. Communities have many variables to consider when determining where there recyclables will be marketed, however the key determinants are costs and revenues. We do recognize the limitations of the current recycling data, and agree that improved data would lead to more informed decision-making by policy makers, and help the private sector users of recyclables increase their understanding of what recyclable materials may be available.

The report that would be developed by EPA in consultation with the Departments of Energy and Commerce under Section 4 of the draft Bill would provide very detailed and useful information on the amounts of various materials actually diverted by various collection systems, the amounts recycled by manufacturers, and the amounts disposed of by landfills. We have three cautionary areas of concern: the time frame for collecting this data, the cost estimate for the data collection effort and the authorities that would be provided to the agency to accomplish this task.

Two hundred and seventy days seems to be a very short time to produce this information, especially if new surveys are necessary. The coordination with other agencies and public and private recycling programs, along with putting in place survey documents and contracts to carry out the work, will require significant time even before the work can begin. Furthermore, the authorization of $499,000 for these purposes may not be sufficient. To obtain information regarding tonnage by collection type and destination may require surveys carried out at the municipal level. Tracking the flow of materials from collector to broker, to processor, to manufacturer could be a difficult task. The costs would depend on the number and extent of

any new surveys that were needed. Finally, whether this type of information can be obtained from voluntary information requests and existing published data is questionable. We suggest that the Committee consult with EPA on the schedule and budget, and consider incentives that would significantly increase voluntary information submittals. We do recognize that this bill would provide EPA with the authority to conduct more wide-scale voluntary surveys, but the question is how to increase response rates.

In conclusion, let me say that SWANA would be pleased to work along with EPA on this effort, and we would encourage our members to cooperate with it, because we believe that the information would be useful and very helpful to both the suppliers and users of recycled materials.

I would be happy to answer any questions.