



**American
Forest & Paper
Association**

March 4, 2016

Committee on the Environment
The Connecticut General Assembly
Legislative Office Building
Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

RE: Raised Bill 226- An Act Concerning Single-Use Carryout Bags

Dear Chairman Kennedy, Jr., Chairman Albis, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA), we appreciate the opportunity to share our perspective on legislation under consideration by the Committee on the Act Concerning Single-Use Carryout Bags. We oppose RSB 226 due to a concern with the post-consumer content requirement. AF&PA is active on this issue in states and localities across the country. We believe that bag legislation should not wrongfully penalize our product—a commodity that is highly recycled, recyclable, compostable and renewable.

AF&PA is the national trade association for the forest products industry, representing pulp, paper, packaging, tissue, and wood products manufacturers, and forest landowners. Our companies make products essential for everyday life from renewable and recyclable resources that sustain the environment. The forest products industry accounts for approximately 4 percent of the total U.S. manufacturing GDP, manufactures approximately \$210 billion in products annually, and employs nearly 900,000 men and women. The industry meets a payroll of approximately \$50 billion annually and is among the top 10 manufacturing sector employers in 47 states.

In Connecticut, the industry employs more than 3,500 individuals, with an annual payroll of over \$290 million. The estimated state and local taxes paid by the forest products industry totals \$37 million annually.

Thanks to the continuing efforts of AF&PA members and the millions of individuals who recycle at home, work and school every day, the paper and packaging industry has achieved a consistently high recovery rate. In 2014, 65.4 percent of all paper consumed in the U.S. was recovered for recycling, and the recovery rate has met or exceeded 63 percent for the past six years. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, more paper (by weight) is recovered for recycling from municipal solid waste streams than glass, plastic, steel and aluminum combined. In 2014, 96 percent of the U.S. population had access to community curbside and/or drop-off paper recycling services. Paper recovery is an environmental success story, saving an average of 3.3 cubic yards of landfill space for each ton of paper recycled. Paper recovery has

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fostered a dynamic marketplace that allows recovered fiber to find its highest-value end use in manufacturing new paper and paperboard. That, in turn, helps to encourage more recycling.

Mandated use of recycled fiber content can have unintended economic and environmental effects. Rather than drive increased recovery of paper, increasing recycled content minimums would only shift the available supply of fiber to other products where it is less efficiently used.

Government mandates as a mechanism to drive paper recovery are not needed. Global demand for recovered fiber exceeds supply and is growing. Instead, local and state governments should partner with industry and environmental groups on programs to increase the recovery rate.

AF&PA opposes recycled content mandates and believes the Committee should seek to ensure the focus for recycled materials remains on increasing paper recovery, not content mandates. While there are environmental benefits of recovering paper that would otherwise go to landfill, the benefits of replacing virgin fiber with recovered fiber vary widely, depending on many product and mill-specific variables.

We look forward to continuing our work with the state of Connecticut. Please feel free to contact Abigail Turner, Manager, State Government Affairs, AF&PA at (202) 463-2596 or abigail_turner@afandpa.org for further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cathy Foley".

Cathy Foley
Group Vice President