



Maine Forest Products Council

The voice of Maine's forest economy

Companies represented on the MFPC Board

American Forest Mgmt.
Baskahegan Co.
BBC Lands LLC
Bradbury Forest Mgmt.
Columbia Forest Prod.
Cross Insurance
Family Forestry
Farm Credit East
Fontaine Inc.
H.C. Haynes
Huber Resources
Innovative Natural Resource Solutions
J.D. Irving
Katahdin Forest Mgmt.
Key Bank
LandVest Inc.
Limington Lumber
Louisiana Pacific
Maibec Logging
ND Paper
Nicols Brothers
Pingree Associates
Pixelle Specialty Sol.
Pleasant River Lumber
Prentiss & Carlisle
ReEnergy
Richard Wing & Son
Robbins Lumber
Sappi North America
Southern Maine Forestry
Stead Timberlands
TD Bank
Timber Resource Group
Timberstate G.
Wadsworth Woodlands
Wagner Forest Mgt.
Weyerhaeuser

Testimony opposing LD 1471 An Act To Establish a Stewardship Program for Packaging and LD 1541 An Act To Support and Improve Municipal Recycling Programs and Save Taxpayer Money

May 10, 2021

Patrick Strauch, Executive Director

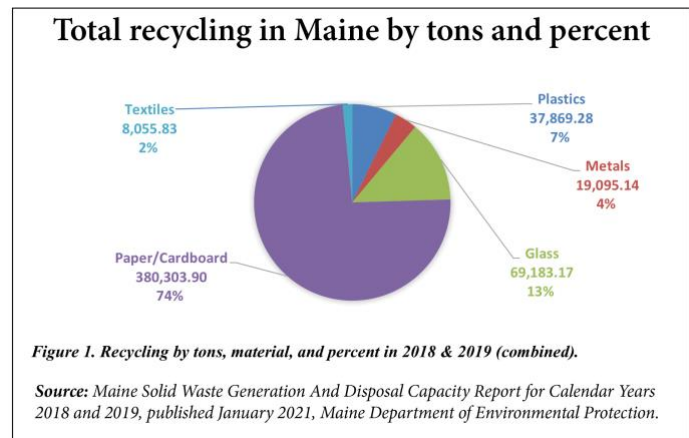
Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker and distinguished members of the Environment and Natural Resources, I am Patrick Strauch from Exeter, Maine, and the executive director of the Maine Forest Products Council (MFPC). I represent Maine's forest product industry, which includes more than \$8 billion in economic contribution to the state's economy, and more than 33,000 direct and indirect jobs.

LD 1541 and LD 1471 both seek to establish an extended producer responsibility program (EPR) for packaging. MFPC opposes both bills because they are unnecessary. As the chart at right shows, paper recycling already is a success in Maine.

It also is a national success.¹

The paper recycling rate has grown over the decades, and remains consistently high, meeting or exceeding 63 percent since 2009. In 2019, 66.2 percent of paper consumed in the United States was recovered for recycling. Technological innovations in product design and processes are continuously allowing our industry to access and recycle more paper-based products.

The national recycling rate for containerboard (corrugated cardboard) in 2018, for example, was 96.4 percent. The three-year average recycling rate for the material that would be most impacted by EPR, old corrugated containers (OCC), is already 92.3 percent.



¹ <https://www.paperrecycles.org/media/news/2020/05/12/u.s.-paper-industry-achieves-consistently-high-recycling-rate>

More than twice as much paper is recycled than is sent to landfills, and every ton of paper recovered for recycling saves 3.3 cubic yards of landfill space.

In addition, ND Paper announced in April that it is launching a new recycled pulping operation at its mill in Old Town. When it is at full operation, the multi-million investment will produce 200 metric tons of unbleached pulp daily and support 20 new jobs in Maine.

Paper recycling helps extend the life of paper and paper-based packaging products, making it an integral part of the industry's sustainability story. Recycled paper fibers can be used at least seven times to make new and innovative paper products.

Recycling paper also reduces methane and carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. When paper decomposes anaerobically in landfills, it produces the gas methane. Methane, a highly potent greenhouse gas, together with carbon dioxide contribute to global climate change. Trees absorb carbon dioxide and when they are cut down to make paper products, more carbon dioxide is released than absorbed. Processing wood to make paper pulp using fossil fuel-based energy releases additional carbon dioxide. According to the EPA, recycling one ton of paper can reduce greenhouse gas levels by one metric ton of carbon equivalent.

Paper recycling is already at such a high level and approaching the maximum levels that are practically achievable. So EPR is unlikely to improve the recovery rate.

MFPC urges you to vote **Ought Not To Pass on LD 1471 and LD 1541.**