



April 8, 2014

The Honorable Charles S. Dean, Sr.
Chairman, Environmental Preservation and Conservation
Florida Senate
311 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Chairman Dean,

The Senate Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation will consider Senate Bill 830, which seeks to prohibit stores from providing plastic carryout bags while requiring retailers to charge customers a 10-cent fee for recyclable paper bags. On behalf of the American Forest & Paper Association¹ (AF&PA) and the Renewable Bag Council² (RBC), I am writing to **respectfully request that you oppose SB 830 unless paper bags are amended from the scope of the legislation.**

Simply stated, the paper bag is a recycling success story. Not only are paper bags made from recycled paper, they are highly recycled themselves and are a fixture in community recycling programs across Florida and the rest of the country. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the paper bag boasts a national recycling rate of almost 50 percent. More than 60 percent of paper consumed in the U.S. has been recovered for recycling each year since 2009 – and exceeded 65 percent in 2012.

We are also concerned that the draft ordinance defines “recycled paper bag” by specifying that each bag contain 100-percent recycled content, of which 40 percent must be “post consumer” content. Recovered fiber markets are complex, efficient, and dynamic and efforts to regulate or prescribe when and where recovered fiber is used does not necessarily translate into an increase in recovery. Similarly, the problem with the post consumer qualifier is that it is a distinction without a difference. From the manufacturing perspective, all of the material that our industry counts as recycled is post-industrial but all of it may not be post consumer—printer waste and converter scrap for instance. We are particularly concerned that a limited definition of “recycled” needlessly excludes a key segment of the recovered paper marketplace.

The American Forest & Paper Association and the Renewable Bag Council respectfully requests that the Committee be mindful of the many positive environmental attributes of the paper bag as it crafts a bag policy for the state. In light of the

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environmental performance of our product and the commitment our industry has made to paper recovery and recycling, we believe that any effort to regulate or tax paper bags as a means to reduce litter is misguided. In addition to having a limited effect on mitigating litter, any fee on carryout bags will be highly regressive and will disproportionately impact low-income citizens as the cost of basic necessities continues to rise.

We encourage you to amend paper from the scope of the legislation and we stand ready to assist you and offer our expertise as a resource as you continue the dialogue on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Bartheld', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Elizabeth Bartheld
Vice President, Government Affairs

CC: Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation

¹ AF&PA serves to advance a sustainable U.S. pulp, paper, packaging, and wood products manufacturing industry through fact-based public policy and marketplace advocacy. AF&PA member companies make products essential for everyday life from renewable and recyclable resources and are committed to continuous improvement through the industry's sustainability initiative - *Better Practices, Better Planet 2020*. The forest products industry accounts for approximately 4.5 percent of the total U.S. manufacturing GDP, manufactures approximately \$190 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 Virginia, the industry employs more than 24,000 individuals with an annual payroll of \$1.2 billion. Visit AF&PA online at www.afandpa.org or follow us on Twitter [@ForestandPaper](https://twitter.com/ForestandPaper).

¹¹The Renewable Bag Council (RBC) is comprised of manufacturers and converters of renewable, recycled, recyclable, and compostable Kraft paper used for checkout bags at grocery and retail outlets throughout Washington and across the United States. The RBC is affiliated with the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA the national trade association of the forest products industry, representing pulp, paper, packaging 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 5 percent of the total U.S. manufacturing GDP. Industry companies produce about \$190 billion in products annually and employ nearly 900,000 men and women, exceeding employment levels in the automotive, chemicals and plastics industries. The industry meets a payroll of approximately \$50 billion annually and is among the top 10 manufacturing sector employers in 47 states. In Florida, the industry employs nearly 5,000 individuals and has over 37 manufacturing facilities.