

Industry Panel Supports Paper and Paper-Based Packaging Promotion Order Issued for Public Comment

Paper Check-off program would serve to highlight the benefits of paper and paper-based packaging

WASHINGTON (December 28, 2012) – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced it is seeking public comment on the proposed national Paper and Paper-Based Packaging Promotion, Research and Information Order. The proposed program would cover four segments of the paper industry: printing and writing; kraft packaging paper (used for products such as grocery bags); containerboard (used to make shipping containers); and paperboard (used for food and beverage packaging, tubes, etc). Newsprint and carbonless papers would not be included in the program.

“Today’s announcement is great news for those of us on the Paper Check-off panel and for the health of our industry,” said Jim Rubright, chairman and CEO of RockTenn and chairman of the Paper Check-off Panel. “Paper and paper-based packaging offers a renewable, recyclable products choice for our customers and consumers, and the Paper Check-off program would offer us a unique opportunity to make a sustained investment in telling our story in a targeted and positive way. We appreciate USDA’s efforts in moving this process forward and allowing our industry the opportunity we requested.”

The forest products industry employs nearly 900,000 people, including 329,000 jobs directly affected by the paper grades to be covered in the Paper and Paper-Based Packaging Promotion, Research and Information Order. The total number of jobs affected by covered grades through the supply chain reaches 1.4 million jobs.

“We have an excellent track record on sustainability as an industry, and we need to collectively educate consumers to correct any misperceptions that may be contradictory,” said Mark Gardner, president and CEO of Sappi Fine Paper North America. “The Paper Check-off would allow us to showcase paper and paper-based products with a singular voice to benefit the industry as a whole.”

The USDA oversees such promotional, research and information programs for numerous industries. These programs are initiated and funded by the industry. The Paper Check-off would be funded by an assessment of 35 cents per short ton only on companies producing or importing 100,000 short tons or more annually of the covered grades. The program would be administered by a 12-member board of directors, which would carry out activities to showcase the renewable, reusable and recyclable attributes of paper and paper-based packaging. A referendum would be held among eligible domestic producers and importers prior to a program going into effect.

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The Paper Check-off Panel is a group of industry executives representing the various grades of paper and paper-based packaging, formed to shepherd the industry-initiated effort to establish a paper and paper-based packaging promotion, research and information program.

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