

Paper Industry Votes Yes For The Paper Check-off

Companies approve referendum to create the Paper and Paper-based Packaging Promotion program

WASHINGTON (November 15, 2013) – The paper industry has voted overwhelmingly to create the Paper and Paper-based Packaging Promotion and Research program (Paper Check-off). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the referendum results (concluded on November 8), in which 85 percent of the companies and 95 percent of the production voting to support the measure.

“Today’s announcement represents a seminal moment for our industry to stand together and promote the benefits of paper and paper-based packaging to customers and consumers,” said Paper Check-off Panel Chairman John Williams, president and CEO of Domtar. “Our industry produces recyclable products from a renewable resource. The Paper Check-off will allow us to inform consumers of the sustainable products we make and the responsible manner in which we make them.”

The successful referendum concludes a three-year journey for paper industry leaders, who conducted research, identified the opportunity to improve customer and consumer knowledge about our products and worked to develop the program and inform the industry of the benefits the Paper Check-off could provide. At the request of the industry, USDA issued the proposed Paper and Paper-based Packaging Promotion Research and Information Order for public comment in January 2013. The second proposed rule was issued in September, announcing the Oct. 28-Nov 8 referendum, in which all covered companies were allowed to vote on the proposal.

The Paper Check-off joins numerous other agricultural based products in using the Department of Agriculture’s program structure to fund product promotion, education and research. The initiative will 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 will not be included in the program.

The program will be administered by a 12-member board of directors and funded by an assessment of 35 cents per short ton on companies producing or importing 100,000 short tons or more annually of the covered grades. Producers and importers under the 100,000 short ton threshold, along with converters, will not be assessed but will benefit from the promotion program.

“This new \$25 million program reaching across the paper and paper-based packaging industry offers a tremendous opportunity for improved marketplace information and decision making about our products”, Williams concluded.

For more information about the program, visit papercheckoff.com.

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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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