

# ON THE ISSUES

September 2020

**American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) members make essential and sustainable paper and wood-based products that are used daily by people across the country and around the world — products that play an important role in literacy, education, hygiene, food safety, product marketing and protection, and construction.**

The forest products industry is an essential industry and directly employs approximately 950,000 men and women. Our industry is built on principles of sustainability: producing recyclable products from a renewable resource. We are among the top 10 manufacturing sector employers in 45 states. More than 75 percent of U.S. pulp and paper mills are located in counties designated by the Census Bureau as more than 80 percent rural. We support market-based policies and regulations that foster economic growth, job creation and international competitiveness in this vital sector. We believe public policies are most effective when they meet the economic needs, environmental concerns and societal expectations of our diverse communities.

*Top AF&PA 2020 Advocacy Priorities include Carbon Neutrality of Biomass, Paper Recycling, Regulatory Reform, Transportation Infrastructure and rapid response for the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. Visit [afandpa.org/issues](https://afandpa.org/issues) for more in-depth information about our engagement on a range of public policy issues.*

Top AF&PA 2020 Advocacy Priorities include Carbon Neutrality of Biomass, Paper Recycling, Regulatory Reform and Transportation Infrastructure. In addition, AF&PA is working on behalf of members and our essential workforce at the federal and state level on issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Alongside our top priorities, AF&PA remains engaged in important advocacy discussions related to international trade and climate policy. Visit [afandpa.org/issues](https://afandpa.org/issues) for more in-depth information about the range of public policies in which we are engaged.

## **COVID-19**

AF&PA members are committed to the safety of our workforce and our end-users. The COVID-19 pandemic is dynamic and changes daily. AF&PA remains engaged in the coronavirus challenge to address critical issues as they arise and take proactive measures to ensure the success of our industry. Our members make essential products, including tissue products, packaging and other consumer products crucial to daily life. The industry is working safely and efficiently to respond to spikes in demand to meet the needs of Americans across the nation and worldwide.

AF&PA has compiled information and resources related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including on issues such as workplace safety, scientific studies, and economic relief programs. This information is available at [afandpa.org/Covid-19](https://afandpa.org/Covid-19).

## **Carbon Neutrality of Biomass**

Paper and wood products manufacturers use as much of the tree as possible to make paper, packaging and wood products, while remaining residuals are used as a renewable energy source (biomass) to power mills. The carbon

neutrality of biomass harvested from sustainably-managed forests has been repeatedly recognized by studies, agencies, institutions, legislation and rules around the world. AF&PA has for many years advocated for science-based policies that acknowledge the carbon neutrality of biomass and provide regulatory certainty to level the playing field for global competition and the protection of rural American jobs.

### ***Continued Success for Paper Recycling at the State and Federal Level***

Paper recycling is an environmental and economic success story. The recycling rate has nearly doubled since 1990 and has met or exceeded 63 percent since 2009. Efforts to ban, tax or restrict access to paper products are counterproductive to this achievement and discourage the use of products that are recyclable, compostable, reusable and made from renewable and recycled material.

AF&PA supports Senators Rob Portman (R-OH) and Debbie Stabenow's (D-MI) RECYCLE Act, which recognizes that educating consumers on the right ways to recycle is one of the best ways we can increase the quantity and quality of paper in the recycling stream.

### ***Regulatory Reform***

U.S. paper and wood products manufacturers have spent billions of dollars on regulatory compliance and are estimated to spend billions in new capital expenditures over the next decade. Measures that streamline the permit process and reduce cost and uncertainty of regulations remain a top priority.

### ***Transportation Infrastructure***

Paper and wood products manufacturers face a nationwide shortage of transportation capacity, an aging infrastructure, and inefficient surface transportation policies. As a result, connecting our products, raw materials and consumers is difficult and costly. Specifically, AF&PA encourages necessary infrastructure enhancements, increasing truck weight limits on federal interstate highways and freight rail system reforms that prioritize shippers' concerns.



### ***Better Practices, Better Planet 2020***

The ***Better Practices, Better Planet 2020*** initiative includes one of the most extensive sets of sustainability goals established for a U.S. manufacturing industry. We met or exceeded many goals as highlighted in our latest report:

- We exceeded our goal to improve workplace safety while striving for a vision of zero injuries. In 2018, we achieved a 38.4 percent improvement in the recordable incidence rate, surpassing our 25 percent reduction goal. There were 1.6 recordable cases per 200,000 hours worked in 2018 compared to 2.6 recordable cases set in our 2006 baseline year.
- We also met our goal to increase the amount of fiber procured from certified forestlands or through certified fiber sourcing programs in the U.S. from 2005 to 2020 and work to decrease illegal logging. In 2018, 99 percent of the total wood fiber from forests, used for product, was procured through a Certified Sourcing Program and 28.1 percent of wood fiber was sourced from third-party certified forests lands. This represents a 12 percentage point and 5.1 percentage point increase, respectively, from our 2005 baseline.
- AF&PA members exceeded the goal to increase energy efficiency by at least 10 percent. In 2018, member purchased energy use per ton of product was 13.3 percent lower than the 2005 baseline year.
- We have also exceeded our goal to reduce members' greenhouse gas emissions by least a 20 percent. In 2018, member GHG emissions – measured in carbon dioxide equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub> eq) per ton of production – were 23.2 percent lower than the 2005 baseline.
- In 2018, AF&PA member pulp and paper mill water use per ton of product decreased by 6.9 percent from the 2005 baseline.
- The paper recycling rate has met or exceeded 63 percent since 2009 and in 2019, the paper recycling rate was 66.2 percent.

Download the full report and get more in-depth analysis at [sustainability.afandpa.org](https://sustainability.afandpa.org)