

Memorandum of Opposition to MA S. 517, S. 610 and H. 878

MPA - the Association of Magazine Media (MPA) opposes S.517, S. 610 and H. 878 as currently drafted. Each of these bills would establish an unnecessary and counterproductive mandate upon paper products, including on the long-established magazine media industry that provides an environmentally safe product with recycling rates well above other materials in the marketplace.

MPA represents about 500 magazine media brands. From large multi-media publishing companies to small independent publications, MPA members inform, inspire and entertain through more than 4 million subscriptions in 2.6 million households in Massachusetts. Our readers depend on our publications for reliable news and information – needed by society now more than ever. Further, magazines are an important part of the Massachusetts economy, with the arts and media category employing more than 47,000 people in in the state, plus many more freelance contractors.

Magazine publishers care about the environment

MPA member's long-standing engagement in environmental stewardship and initiatives stems from publishers' desire to support and implement responsible, economically-sound environmental policies related to the full lifecycles of our magazine products, from raw materials to well-read copies. Although most magazine publishers provide content across a wide range of media streams, many of our readers still desire the tactile feel and enjoyment of physical magazine copies they can save and reuse over time. They may want to keep recipes, travel information for a longed-for destination, iconic cover pictures, and interesting long-form journalism.

Our readers expect us to be good stewards of the environment, and we are. Magazines are recyclable, made from environmentally certified paper, and biodegradable. Our paper is sourced from sustainable forests via certified chain of custody protocols, our inks are linseed oil based and non-toxic, our adhesives water soluble, and any protective packaging used is recyclable. MPA has engaged in several industry wide campaigns to promote recycling of magazines after use.

Magazines have huge journalistic impact. They are not just a “covered material”. Long-form magazine journalism is a trusted and compelling source of news and information of great value to readers and society on a vast range of topics, including environmental issues. It is important to protect this source of information.

Creating incentives to reduce paper in magazines will exacerbate the digital divide. We are concerned that these bills would discriminate against printed media compared to other media formats by enacting an onerous regulatory regime and fees on print media in a manner that would discourage the dissemination of news and information in such formats. A march toward

online-only magazines would exacerbate the digital divide, depriving those without broadband access to even more trusted sources of information.

S. 517, S. 610 and H. 878 should not include paper products in the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) systems the bills would create. However well-intended, this bill would punish magazines, newspapers and other paper users without improving recycling rates for paper products or increasing environmental protections. Magazine publishers and other manufacturers of paper products are already proactively engaged in sustainability initiatives that these bills would not enhance. They would simply transfer the costs of existing recycling systems from municipalities to publishers, resulting in major negative impacts to the magazine industry in Massachusetts, the Massachusetts economy, and to Massachusetts consumers. **EPR legislation should focus on products with severe environmental impacts and with low current recycling rates, not on products that are recyclable and biodegradable, with current recycling rates near maximum achievable levels.**

Magazines, newspapers and the broader paper industry are successful recyclers.

- Paper is 100% recyclable and has been recycled at rates exceeding 63% every year since 2009. Further, 100% of magazines unsold at the newsstand have perennially been recycled. Paper is doing a significantly better job than other industries. EPA's November 2020 recycling report indicates recycling rates of 8.5% for plastics, 17.2% for aluminum, 18.2% for rubber and leather, 25% for glass and 68.2% for paper.
- More than 63% of paper discarded by consumers is already recycled, and EPA estimates that magazines account for only 0.3% of municipal solid waste.
- Approximately 80% of all U.S. paper mills utilize recovered fiber to make everything from paper-based packaging to tissue products to office paper and newspapers.
- After a period of negative market prices for recovered paper, the market is expected to slowly improve through 2023.

Including paper in these bills will not help the environment or achieve the bill's environmental goals. It will only hurt magazines and other paper products. Available data shows the failure of EPR for paper. We urge Legislators to proceed with caution and make sure EPR programs really work.

- EPR programs in Europe do not include paper products. They focus on materials that have true recycling and recyclability challenges.
- Several EPR programs in Canada do include paper products and the experience there is instructive. Rather than improving environmental performance and efficiency, the system in Canada demonstrates how simply shifting costs from municipalities to paper producers actually reduces the efficiency of the recovery system and increases costs. In British Columbia, recycling rates have stalled and are trending downwards while the fees have fluctuated wildly and increased markedly. The 2020 printing paper fee of \$175 US dollars per ton represented an 86% increase compared to 2019. In 2021, the rate has increased dramatically once again, to \$255 US dollars/ton, close to 50% over 2020 fees. These types of volatile uncapped fees will devastate many Massachusetts companies and

industries, including the magazine industry, especially coming on top of the continuing economic impact and expenses related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Requiring paper to pay fees into a structure that combines all products together disrupts systems that have been working today and would require magazines and newspapers to subsidize producers of less environmentally-friendly materials, previously lacking successful recycling programs.
- Paper is not toxic, hazardous or hard to handle. Inks and adhesives used by the magazine industry have no residual negative impacts on the recycling process. In contrast, other materials take years to decompose, release toxins into the environment and can release toxic pollution if burned. These are the materials causing the majority of the problem and should be the target of EPR legislation – not paper.

We appreciate your consideration of the information contained in this memo, and we urge the committee to reject these bills if paper, specifically magazines, are included any EPR program. Contributions to journalism, high recycling rates, very low contribution to the waste stream, concerns about exacerbating digital divides and significant data about the failure of EPR systems in Canada with respect to paper are among the justifications for removal from the bills.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Rita Cohen, Senior Vice President at rcohen@magazine.org or (202) 369-1237.